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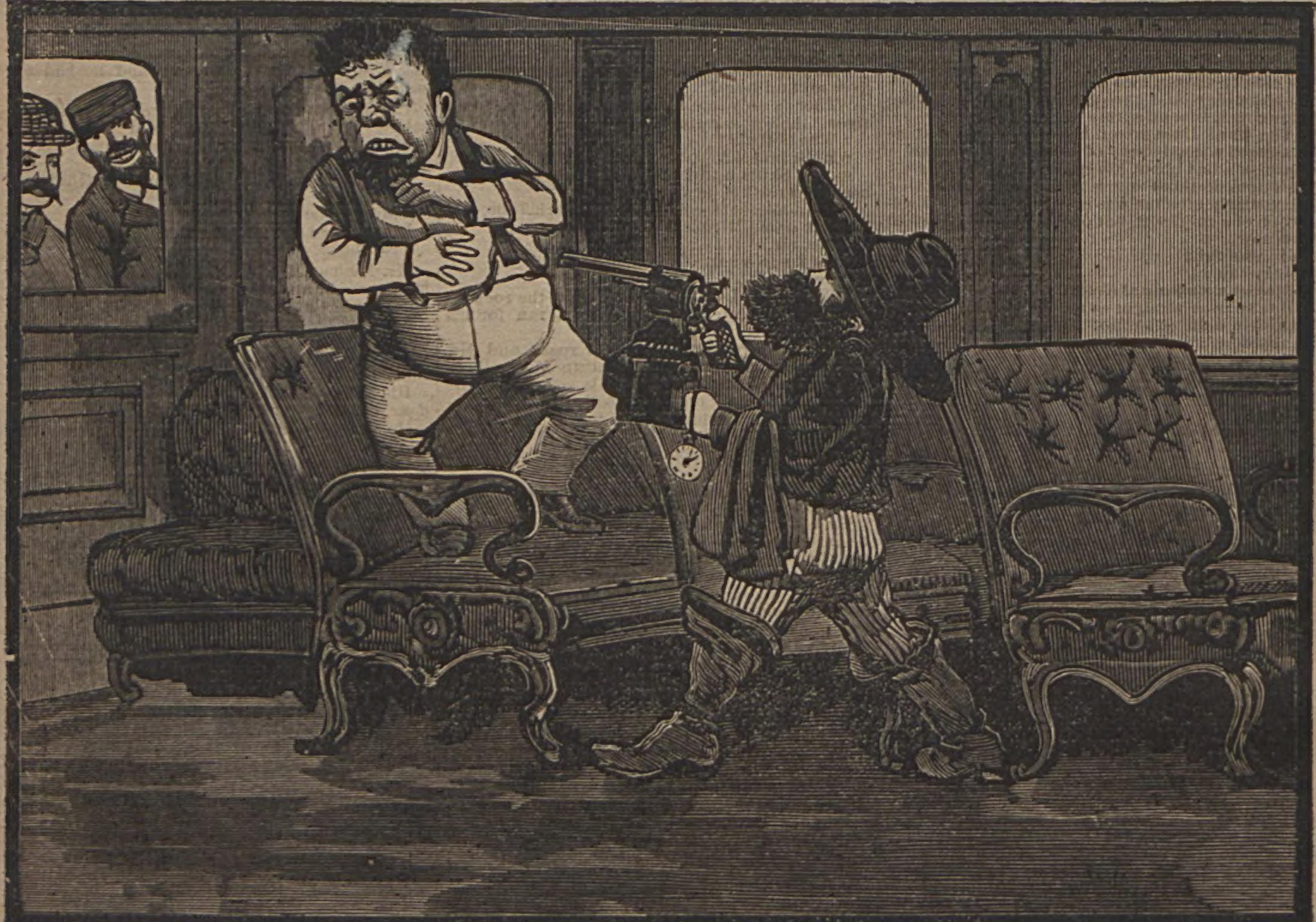
FRANK TOUSEY PUBLISHER, 34 & 36 NORTH MOORE STREET, N. Y.
NEW YORK, Dec. 22, 1861

{ PRICE
5 CENTS.

Vol. I

MIKE McGUINNESS: OR, TRAVELING FOR PLEASURE.

BY TOM TEASER.



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MIKE McGUINNESS;

OR,

TRAVELING FOR PLEASURE.

By TOM TEASER,

Author of "A Bad Egg," "Mulligan's Boy," "Nip and Flip," "Jim Jams," "Corkey," "Senator Muldoon," "Muldoon Abroad," "Jimmy Grimes," "Muldoon the Solid Man," "Hildebrandt Fitzgum," "The Deacon's Son," "Skinny the Tin Peddler," "Mulcahy Twins," "Muldoon's Boarding-House," "Muldoon's Brother Dan," "Two in a Box," "Ikey; or, He Never Got Left," "Tommy Tubbs, the Pride of the School," "A Happy Pair," "The Aldermen Sweeneys of New York," "The Jolly Moke; or, Having Lots of Fun," "Our Camping Out Club," "Muldoon the Cop," "Muldoon's Grocery Store," Etc.

PART I.

THE neighborhood of the East river, down by the rocks, cannot be considered very pleasant, but a certain young man was walking along, or rather stumbling along, through a muddy, unpaved street.

The young man was a puzzle as regards age. Sometimes he looked to be a good deal older than his closely-shaven face would imply, and a careful observer would have given out the tip that the young man was no spring chicken.

The hard lines about his mouth told that he possessed a good deal of determination, while the crow's feet about his eyes and a slightly reddish look in those optics denoted, perhaps, that the young gentleman was used to occasional dissipation of a mild sort, but of that we cannot reveal just now.

He was thin.

Very thin.

Almost a walking skeleton.

But he was straight as an arrow, and he was attired in a dingy suit of black, which had evidently done good service, and which made him look even more emaciated than he was and served to set off the pallor of his face, for his countenance contained about as much color as that of a corpse.

Upon his head was a polo cap, much too small for him.

In his hand he twirled a cane, and although his gaiters were all but upon the ground, they were dignified with dingy white uppers.

Presently the young gentleman soliloquized: "We must be pretty near here, Skitts, my boy—with a block or two."

Just then a barefooted boy came along carrying his father's dinner pail.

Mr. Skitts hailed the pail-bearer as an angel. Mr. Skitts skipped forward.

He pointed his right forefinger at the lad.

"Pause!" he said in an awful voice.

The lad did.

He dropped his pail in his consternation.

"Please, mister," whined he, with maybe the knowledge of some juvenile sin upon his soul, "lemme go, I ain't done nuthin'."

"Answer my questions and I will let you go," Mr. Skitts promised, "but you must answer them truthfully. You behold this cane?"

"Yes, sir."

"Know what it is?"

"A cane."

"Not only a cane, but a sword-cane, and if I find you in a falsehood I will not hesitate to deprive you of your infant existence by jabbing you through the lung."

The poor kid burst into tears.

He thought that his last day had come. No wonder, for he was only about seven years old.

"Don't stab me," he sobbed, "an' I'll answer anything."

"Which is just which you will find it to your advantage to do. Question first—are you ready to reply?"

"Yes, sir."

"As you live around here, you know who else lives around here?"

"There's only one man before yer come to de river," the boy answered.

"Who is that?"

"McGuinness."

As Mr. Skitts heard the boy's reply his visage became wreathed in smiles.

"My adolescent companion," queried he, "is his first name Michael?"

"Yes, sir."

"He keeps a sort of lodging-house?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where can I find his palace upon the rocks?"

The boy directed him, and then ran for his life.

A double around a couple of rocks, and Mr. Skitts beheld himself somewhat unexpectedly in the presence of the object of his search, for the house—if house it could be called—did not appear on a casual view to be bigger than a chicken-coop.

Mr. Skitts went boldly up to the door of the palatial abode.

The door was open, but he knocked with his usual etiquette.

He had heard a hum of voices in the house as he entered, but at his tap all was still, and he heard the sound of scurrying fugitives.

A dilatory response came after several minutes.

A little girl of maybe about seven, but who was precocious for her years, like all of the children of the poor.

"Who is ye?" she asked, in an old voice for her age.

With the utmost of gravity Mr. Skitts doffed his polo cap.

The doffing of his cap gave him away as regarded his age, for he was nearly bald, except for two little tufts on top of his head.

"Who," interrogated he, "my fair maiden, have I the pleasure of addressing?"

At this address the "fair maiden" shrank back.

"Mar!" she presently piped in shrill tones.

"Here's a man."

"Did ye call, Marguerite?" asked a lady, appearing up the kitchen stairs, or rather ladder.

"Yes, mar."

"What is it?"

"Here's a man."

Deftly Mr. Skitts slid into the hallway and confronted the lady.

She was about forty-five, built very copious, and owning splendid physical developments.

Her face was mottled, and she was clad in some sort of an old-fashioned dress.

"Mrs. McGuinness, I suppose?" beamed Mr. Skitts, showing all of his teeth, and he had big ones, in a winning smile.

The lady was so taken by surprise at the apparition of Skitts that she could not find her voice, but he saved her the trouble of doing so as he went on:

"Is your husband, Mr. Michael McGuinness, within?"

"Mike," she called, "come up."

In response Mr. Michael McGuinness put in an appearance.

Mr. Michael McGuinness could not be called handsome by any means. His was of the sawed-off order of physical beauty.

Stumpy, short and bandy-legged was he, and he possessed very prominent teeth.

His nose was a pug, and his feet vouched for themselves.

His hair, which was red, he wore *a la Pompadour*, brushed up like a fright-wig.

He was arrayed in a soiled jumper overalls and bare feet. A green shade gave a glamour of romance to his left eye.

He ducked his head to Mr. Skitts.

"Do ye wish to see me?" he mumbled, standing first upon one foot and then upon the other.

Mr. Skitts extended his hand.

"Mr. McGuinness," said he, "allow me to clasp your flesh."

Somewhat in a daze, McGuinness suffered his grimy paw to be wrung, wondering what it was all about.

"Now, McGuinness—by the way, I might just as well call you Mac for short—when can we have a few moments' private conversation?"

"Any toime, sir. We will go in the parlor."

They did so.

The parlor was at least comfortable.

Mr. Skitts proceeded to seat himself.

He threw one leg carelessly over the arm of the rocking-chair.

"Smoke, Mac?" he asked, as he produced two cigars.

"Ivery toime," as he grabbed the cigar, responded McGuinness.

"I have good news for you," said Mr. Skitts.

"Good news?"

"Yes."

Mr. Skitts produced a card-case. From it he selected a card.

It read as follows:

"BYRON SKITTS,
Counselor at Law."

And then down in one corner in small type was a line stating that Mr. Skitts was connected with a well-known firm of lawyers.

Mr. McGuinness took the card.

"Mac," briskly said Mr. Skitts, "allow me to congratulate you. The card is for you."

"Me?"

"Yes, sir."

"What upon?"

"Mac, old boy, you are a rich man, and you can paint the town all of the colors of the rainbow if you so desire, providing that you do it judiciously."

Mr. McGuinness seemed dazed.

"Ye are not joking?" he said.

"No."

"Well, how much am I worth?"

"Do you recollect ever having an uncle Michael McGuinness, of County Kerry, Ireland?"

"Yis, sir."

"Your uncle has crossed to the other shore, and left you his heir."

McGuinness opened his eyes wide.

"Ye don't mane it!" he ejaculated.

"I do."

"But why should he lave me anything?"

"Are not you named after him?"

"Thrue! Bedad, come to think, me Uncle Mike did loike me aither all. Will there be any money much left for me aither I pay for the expenses av the funeral?"

"Mac, my dear Mac, don't faint, try to calm your pulse," impressively urged Mr. Skitts. "You are worth, on a guess, about two-thirds of a million."

Mr. McGuinness looked as if he had had a paralytic shock.

He sank dumbly back with a vacant stare.

"It's true, Mac, it is true," Mr. Skitts reiterated, "and here are the legal memoranda which refers to your uncle's legacy. You will have to call at my office as soon as convenient, and ask for me—ask for me, mind you, nobody else. For Heaven's sake don't ask for Porker; but, pshaw! he don't know Porker. I rather think that I have gotten the best of my pettifogging friend."

Suddenly McGuinness came to life.

He jumped up in his chair.

He gave vent to a regular Irish war-whoop.

"Ring the dinner-bell, Ellen, ring it for yez loife," he howled to his wife.

Mrs. McMaunness promptly responded to her husband's call.

"Ellen," roared McGuinness, "call Teresa Evangeline, call the twins, call Danny, bad cess!"

She looked aghast.

"Ye have had bad news, I know," she wept.

"Not at all, Mrs. McGuinness, but this is a queer wurruld av ours, and we all have our ups and downs. A whirl of Fortune's wheel has made your consort wealthy."

"Glory be to God!" interrupted Mrs. McGuinness; "and for how much wealth?"

"Three—quarters—of—a—million—dollars," pompously enunciated Mr. Skitts.

Mrs. McGuinness came nearer fainting than ever before in her life.

"Teresa Evangeline!" she called, beginning in a bellow and dying out to a whine.

In bounced Teresa Evangeline.

She was about fifteen years old, and a fair specimen of the average working-girl, for she was employed in a cigarette factory.

As for her beauty, she had just about as much as that of her father, modified by youth and a carotty bang which nearly tickled the end of her nose.

"What is it, mar—what is it?" she asked.

"Wather!"

Mr. Skitts made a move for a pitcher upon the table, and poured out a glass of water before Teresa Evangeline realized that she had been superseded.

"I will attend to your mother, dear young miss," he declared. "I will explain later. Your father is one of the bloated monopolists of the land, and never shall he be obliged to work again in his life. That is, if the jurisdiction of affairs are left to me, Byron Skitts, Esq. I am leaving all of my other law business to look after you, and you alone. Never have I taken such a fancy to a man, or, indeed, may I say to the whole family. I will watch over you and protect you. I will be in the breach every time."

Thus having exhausted himself, Byron Skitts struck an attitude as if to say, "Behold what I have done for you!"

The next minute, however, he was forced to unbend it.

Because the children, as McGuinness called them, came rushing in.

Besides the fascinating Teresa Evangeline, there was a complete counterpart of the damsel who had first greeted Mr. Skitts.

No wonder.

The two were twins, and if they had not known that one of them was called Eliza and the other Marguerite, they would probably have kept on mistaking themselves for each other all of their lives.

Following upon their heels came Daniel. Daniel, to make a plain statement, was not at all handsome. He was a big baby, his father always having petted him, seeing that his other children had panned out girls.

"What do ye want me for?" asked Daniel, in a whine, of his father.

In answer McGuinness beckoned to his son.

"Rist yez head upon me bosom, Daniel. Me Uncle Moike, after who I wur named, and who niver did any good all av his loife, has finally atoned by his dying and laving me—guess how much?"

"Fifteen dollars?" hesitatingly inquired Daniel.

"Fifteen dollars!" repeated Mr. McGuinness, in refrigerator accents, "I am worth now three-quarters av a million dollars."

"And I, Byron Skitts. Counselor at Law, vouch that such is a verity."

As he spoke he transfixes Marguerite with his intelligent forefinger, an action which rendered the poor child dumb for the while.

If she was stilled Daniel was not.

He gave vent to a wild yell of pleasure.

"Hurray!" he howled; "I can wear a high hat now and all the picket-fence collars I want."

"Most assuredly," said Byron, beaming upon all present like a good genius.

Daniel jumped into a chair and began wildly waving his handkerchief.

His example was contagious.

In a twinkling the parlor was a scene of activity.

McGuinness himself gave vent to his emotion in a regular old-fashioned break-down.

Mrs. McGuinness and Teresa Evangeline grabbed each other and began to dance a breakdown.

The twins caught the fever, too, and yelled joyfully.

Mr. Skitts looked on the picture of happiness.

"Enjoy yourself," he said; "let the not unnatural ebullition of joy pass away, and—"

"Mar?" said Marguerite, who had been looking out of the window.

"Well?" asked Mrs. McGuinness, cessating her light fantastic toe business.

"Here comes a man."

"Where?"

"He's right in front."

Mr. Skitts sprang to the window.

An expression of the utmost happiness came over his face.

He beheld a tall, stout, greasy-faced man, clad in shabby black and a white high hat, coming in.

Mr. Skitts knew him well.

The new-comer was Porker, whom Mr. Skitts had mentioned before.

Both were about alike, the jackals of the legal profession, doing the dirty work for some well-known firm, so that they can claim to be connected with them and "pick up what" they can.

Mr. Skitts bounded out on the porch.

"Porker, old fellow," he said, in genial tones, "this is an unexpected pleasure."

Maybe it might have been to Skitts.

But it did not appear to be at all to the gentleman addressed by the name of Porker.

He turned pale.

He staggered.

"You—Skitts!" he gasped, in a hoarse whisper, as his face paled.

"Yes, it's me," smilingly said Mr. Skitts, from the porch. "Allow me to introduce you to my client, Mr. Michael McGuinness, of whose legal affairs I have sole control, and his charming family. Come up, Porker; join us."

But the fleshy gentleman seemed to have shrunk about a hundred pounds.

"How—how—how," he faltered, "did you get onto the snap?"

"The early bird catches the worm, old boy," assured Mr. Skitts. "Come in; make yourself at home."

The discomfited Porker could do naught but obey.

But he looked a picture of fat misery as he seated himself upon the end of a chair.

His heart was broken.

He had calculated that he would have been the one to bring the good news to McGuinness.

But he had been forestalled.

"Blame it!" he muttered to himself, "why did not I take the elevated road instead of the street-cars? I might have headed him off."

Mr. Skitts produced a coin.

"Let us celebrate this auspicious occasion," he requested. "Daniel, would you mind working the growler and bring us more cigars?"

Daniel obeyed.

The result was that hilarity soon reigned.

With one exception.

That was Mr. Porker.

He was the ghost at the banquet feast.

He tried to enjoy his beer.

He couldn't.

It seemed flat.

His cigar, too, was a stayer—warranted to stay out all of the while. He hitched his chair up to Skitts'.

"Say, Byron, old fellow," he whispered, "I'm in whack, ain't I?"

Mr. Skitts looked the allegory of surprise.

"Whack on who?" he asked.

Porker jerked his thumb in the direction of McGuinness.

"The sucker," he said.

Mr. Skitts' brows corrugated.

"Not much," said he; "he's mine, cully, and you keep off the grass."

"But—but—"

Mr. Skitts waved him away.

"Any little legal business that I can put in your way that I won't be able to attend to myself for my client I will give you," he said.

Poor Porker was crushed.

"Then I suppose I might just as well be going," he said.

"No hurry, no hurry at all—the day is young yet," blithely answered Mr. Skitts. "Stay with us yet for a while."

There was something, though, in the atmosphere uncongenial to Mr. Porker.

With a frigid bow he left.

"Curses upon Skitts!" he muttered, as he stumbled over the rocks, a baleful light in his eyes and his hands thrust deep in his pants. "I will eucrhe him yet. Ruby Porker can down a Skitts any time."

Byron Skitts knew that he had a regular puding on the helpless clan of McGuinness.

Opportunity had put a chance in the way of feathering his nest, which he well meant to clutch on to.

"Of course, Mac," he said, "you must leave here right away."

"Tis meself that is willing to go now roight off," responded McGuinness, as he made a move as if to start with all of his family.

Mr. Skitts restrained him.

"Gently," he purred. "Your idea of traveling for pleasure is a *ne plus ultra* one. But I would not go traveling right away—not for a little while. Excuse me for plain speaking, but you all want a society veneer—a society varnish."

McGuinness nodded his cranium approvingly.

"I think loikewise meself," he assented. "It is foine the ould woman will look wid a society veneer on her."

"I don't care about any veneers, for I heard a girl, whose mother is a dressmaker, say that they were all out of style. I want a seal-skin dolman."

"Two of them, and a fur-lined opera-cloak," assented their benefactor. "But to continue—I will secure to-morrow a furnished mansion upon Fifth avenue, with servants, horses and carriages, plate, and everything complete, just the temporary abiding place that a monopolist like you should have."

At the sound of the word monopolist, which to McGuinness was something way up in the world, although he could not have told exactly what he, appeared to grow an inch taller.

"Go ahead," he excitedly said. "I lave all in yez hands. I—"

He stopped short.

His face fell.

"What is it?" his visitor queried.

"How can I carry out what ye have arranged wid me wid niver a cint in me pocket?"

"I will provide for all that, reassured," loftily remarked Mr. Skitts. "I have foreign capital behind me. And now, adieu. To-morrow afternoon I will be here, and will have all arrangements consummated. A parting word," and the speaker held McGuinness spellbound by his finger.

"What?" gasped McGuinness.

"Beware of Porker!"

"That friend av yez?"

"Friend! He is a leech, a vampire and a blood-sucker! If he dares come around here again refuse him admittane. I have an idea that he may get up a cabal to deprive you of your inheritance. If he refuses to go when ordered to I would shoot him. Porker is a blood-stained villain."

His words impressed McGuinness, and after Mr. Skitts had departed, shaking hands with the old couple and kissing the twins, McGuinness said:

"It is in a daze that I am. I fale stunned loike I wur whin I fell from off av a tinement-house and were nearly done for. That Mr. Skitts is a wondherful man, and I will be moinded by what he says."

"So wud I," said his wife; "and if that codger, I think he called him, comes around, I wud take none av his blarney off av him."

"Nayther I will!" resolutely determined McGuinness. "I belave Skitts is a thre friend av me own."

Was he?

Time will show.

Needless to say that Skitts did not let the grass grow under his feet.

His had been a career which, to put it as mild as possible, could not bear close investigation, and he was familiar with the shady side of New York society.

In one respect he failed, though.

He did not get the mansion promised the following day, but he did three days later.

The interval was not lost.

The McGuinnesses, piloted by the ever-alert Mr. Skitts, made a visit to the most famous tailors and dressmakers.

Money was no object.

Their *charge d'affairs* had obtained that in some devious manner best known to himself.

"At three," he said, "to-morrow afternoon be dressed. The landau will be here then."

The McGuinnesses did not rest much that night. Their skulls were full of bright visions.

Never, probably, had a landau arrived in that locality before.

Indeed, it did not arrive just in front of the shanty, but a couple of blocks away.

It was hard work for the pedestrian to make his way along the approach to the McGuinness chateau, without a vehicle attempting thefeat.

The McGuinnesses were rather glad than otherwise about this.

It gave them an opportunity to paralyze their old neighbors, who had been duly informed of their departure, and came to see them off with genuine Irish good-will.

Mr. Skitts was on hand.

His personal appearance had decidedly changed for the better.

You would not have recognized the harpy lawyer of a few days previous in the well-dressed gentleman who greeted the family.

The McGuinnesses were dumfounded at the turn-out which they beheld.

It was of olive-green, with red wheels, drawn by two champing steeds.

Upon the box was a coachman—an English coachman—who appeared to be carved out of stone as he sat with his chin uplifted in the air and his whip tightly grasped.

Alongside of him was another equally astonishing apparition to the denizens of that region.

It was a regular "tiger, you know," a wizened little imp, with a face like a grandfather, and who equaled in cheerfulness his elder mortal.

As McGuinness beheld it he clutched at his wife's arm.

"Ould woman," he almost shouted, "luk at it; it is ours."

She gave him a frown.

"What ails ye?" she whispered. "Don't let people know that we have niver been used to such things."

"And nayther more we have," remarked he, a remark made audible enough for those around to hear, and which was a sure promise of a curtain lecture.

The spectators were full of admiration for the equipage.

"Ain't it grand?"

"Wud ye luk at the droiver?"

"Is it a monkey upon the box?"

"It must have cost a million."

"It's the thre color—ould Oireland's own."

"And the wheels!"

"That's roight."

"Thre. The grane above the red."

Mr. Skitts interposed.

He did not care much for that sort of a demonstration, and he was afraid that McGuinness might, liable as not, offer to treat all hands at the liquor saloon on the corner.

He bundled them off into the landau.

All, of course, could not go, but the old couple, Teresa Evangeline, and the twins, were taken, Daniel going with Mr. Skitts on the elevated railroad.

"All right, John," said Mr. Skitts.

The statue on the box woke up.

He gathered his reins.

Crack!

The whip sounded.

Over the rocky road struggled the landau with difficulty.

It did not leave without a send-off, though.

Those gathered about gave them one.

Cries rent the air.

"Good luck to ye!"

"May peace an' plenty be wid ye always."

"Take care av yesilf."

"Let us know where ye live!"

"We'll come call upon ye."

McGuinness felt affected.

"It is good-hearted people that they are, God bless them," he remarked, "and some noight I will send them down a brewery for the compliment."

Needless to say, the McGuinness chariot attracted a good deal of notice. Generally, people believed that it was either part of some circus procession or else a novelty in the advertising line, and half expected to see urchins in the rear.

No wonder.

The way that the occupants were rigged was well, pen cannot describe the way that they were rigged out. They looked like extracts from a Bowery show-window.

The carriage finally got to the house which Mr. Skitts had chosen.

It was the biggest in the block, and only four stories in height.

"It is I who will be afraid to go in, for fear av being kicked out," said McGuinness to his wife.

"Ye kape yez tongue shut," savagely she ordered. "Let me do the talking."

They got out, the door of the landau being opened by a porter, to whom McGuinness mechanically said "Thanks," an observation which affected Mrs. McGuinness so that she tripped on the step, and she and Teresa Evangeline, who caught her foot in her mother's unabridged skirts, had a narrow escape from making an undignified exit.

Most likely, they would had not the porter saved them.

The mansion was open.

Mr. Skitts welcomed them.

He stood in the hall surrounded by servants.

"Mr. McGuinness," said he, introducing a dapper gentleman clad in black and in full-dress, "this is Monsieur Boncheer."

The monsieur bowed.

McGuinness shook hands with him heartily.

"I am plased to know ye," he said, "and I hope to become betther acquianthed wid ye, sir."

The other looked surprised.

He looked inquiringly at Mr. Skitts, gently disengaged his hand and stepped back.

Mr. Skitts gave McGuinness a kick.

"You blamed fool," said he, in low tones, "that is the *chef d'cuisine*."

"The who?"

"*Chef d'cuisine*."

"Who's he?"

"The French cook."

"Is that so?"

"Yes."

"Then, bedad, I must apologize to—"

"The best thing for you to do is go up in the library with me," Mr. Skitts said, as he caught hold of his patron's arm, anxious to get him out of the way before he furnished more of a circus for the grinning servants.

"You must learn, my dear Mac, not to be impetuous," he said, as he ushered McGuinness into the library.

There he gave him a good talking to about his behavior.

McGuinness listened helplessly.

"It is all so new," he extenuated.

"Well, yes, that's a fact," owned Mr. Skitts; "but you must try to do your best."

The gentleman appealed to promised.

He meant to keep his word; but at the elaborate dinner, served in courses, he sadly failed.

His family were not far behind him, and Mr. Skitts was in a cold shiver until the meal was over.

"It will be tougher work than I expected with them," he muttered; "but it will pay me in the end."

Then aloud he said:

"Your valet will be here to-morrow—"

"Me who?" interrupted McGuinness.

"Your valet."

"What is it?"

"Your body-servant—the one who dresses you."

"Ain't I able, begob, to dress mesilf?"

"That is not it. Every gentleman of your position on the social ladder must have a valet. It is imperative. Your wife and Miss McGuinness will have French maids."

"Howly Heaven!" exclaimed McGuinness; "it will be as good as a circus to gaze at the ould crow."

Mr. Skitts interrupted:

"Call your wife Mrs. McGuinness, not old crow."

"All roight, I'll thry and think more about me etiquette."

"Do so. As for the twins, they will have a colored nurse."

"The Saints help her!"

"Why?"

"They will have her dead in a week."

"We'll risk it; and let me see, what else—oh! I nearly forgot the first thing; in the merning we go to the dancing-master's."

"The dancing-master's!" blankly observed McGuinness.

"Yes."

"What do I want av wan? Do ye desoire to convert me into a spieler in me ould days?"

"It is absolutely necessary. In traveling for pleasure you will be begged by the biggest people in the land to favor them with your presence at balls, receptions, state occasions and so forth. It is compulsory. The whole family are to go—not only you alone."

McGuinness yielded.

What else could he do?

Docile as dough to the kneader just then was he to his tutor.

Next morning they went to the dancing academy, which was kept by a nervous little Frenchman named Leroy.

They were in full dress (?) according to the belief of the McGuinnesses.

The head of the family and Daniel wore swallow-tails, but as for the toilets of the ladies, we frankly and freely own that our pen is inadequate to describe them.

But the genius of the artist shows you just how they looked on the front page.

They were received by a liveried servant, and ushered up into a private dancing hall, which was almost a *boudoir*. Mr. Skitts had spared no expense, as McGuinness would find out.

Soon the professor appeared.

He was a nervous little man, the ideal of an instructor in the art of *Terpsichore*.

What he must have thought of the mob no one knows, but he made no sign.

After being introduced to the collection he took from a table his fiddle and bow.

"Now," he said, in broken English, "form on ze line."

"I don't see none, sir," said McGuinness.

"Ze line vas fictitious. Here, I show you how."

As he spoke he grabbed them and pushed them into a line, face front.

"I wondher what this is for?" whispered McGuinness to his wife. "Fair, we luk more like a target company than anything else."

"Ye subsoide," she replied, viewing with great complacency her satin dancing-slippers, which looked the size of tombstones.

"Now," said the professor, "we vill begin ze lesson first. It vill be vun, two, dree."

"I never heard of a dance like that before," spoke up Miss Teresa. "I want to learn to dance the glide."

A slap on her back from her mother reminded her to keep still.

Then the professor confronted them.

"Vun, two, dree," he said, taking three steps first to one side and then to the other. "Vatch me carefully, for all dances are founded on ze vun, two, dree movement. Imitate my example. Ven I vave my fiddle and bow go vun, two, dree. Now!"

He waved the fiddle and bow.

The McGuinnesses attempted to do as they had seen him do.

It was a decided failure.

As the line of dancers immediately broke, and "vun, two, dree" anyhow, each one on their own hook.

They made the floor shake as if a herd of buffaloes had arrived to learn the light fantastic.

"Non! Non!" yelled the excitable Frenchman, waving frantically, "it was all wrong. There vas no harmony; ze grace vas lacking. Vill you please not break my house down more, and try it again?"

PART II.

Poor Monsieur Boncheer was in utter despair at the ill success of his celebrated "vun-two-dree" movement which he alleged was the primary factor in the art of *Terpsichore*.

He almost sank into a heap upon the floor.

"*Purbleu!*" he exclaimed, in piteous accents,

"horses, cattle in ze grace."

A warning cough and a frown from Mr. Skitts brought him

McGuinness; "they fare more than stupid, as if they were made out av cast-iron. It wud give me heartfelt joy to kill the shoemaker who made me these dancing-pumps."

"Zey vill be all right in time," assured Monsieur Boncheer. "Now, if you please, all 'yun--dwo--tree' again."

The line was formed over again, and after about fifty—at least it seemed so to the McGuinnesses—he let up on them.

"You vill get it in time," he promised.

"I hope so," commented McGuinness. "Owing to the build av me dancing-pumps, the sensathions about me feet are as if I had been dancing upon red-hot griddles."

The professor politely ignored the observation.

But he was not through with them yet.

"Ze polka comes next," he said; "zat vas one--two--dree, only lively. Madame, may I have ze pleasure?"

Mrs. McGuinness it was that he accosted.

She had sank down, almost exhausted, into an arm-chair, and was fanning herself with a bright, crimson fan.

"Well, sir?" she queried.

"Ze pleasure."

"Of what?"

"Ze polka, Max."

In response a wild-eyed man, whose hair was combed up akin to a whitewash brush, entered.

Monsieur Boncheer handed him his fiddle and bow.

"Now, madam," invited he.

Mrs. McGuinness arose.

"What is it ye desire?" asked she.

"Ze polka."

With great delicacy he placed himself and her in the proper polka position.

The rest of the family looked on.

First in open-mouthed wonder.

Then they grinned.

And made comments.

Audibly.

"Ma is going to spel!" gasped Teresa Evangeline.

"Look at mar!" cried the twins in concert.

"Wonder if she won't turn it into a clog?" said Daniel. "Luk at the attitude!" he remarked. "I wud give foive hundred dollars for an instantaneous picture av her, and I wud give foive hundred more for another whin the fiddle strokies up."

Presently the fiddle did strike up.

"Max!" cried the professor.

Max obeyed the summons.

From the violin issued the strains of that very entrancing melody, yclept "The Fisherman's Daughter."

The polkaists started off.

It was a very fancy exhibition of the light fantastic toe.

About as much so as the gyrations of a whale and a shrimp, for, to exaggerate a little, such was about the relative difference in physique in the couple.

The polkaists were not allowed to pass uncriticised. McGuinness was delighted.

He expressed himself so that he could be heard by the subject of his strictures.

"Luk at her move."

"Aisy, Ellen."

"All hands around."

"Thry a gloide."

"It is a Newport dip that yez shape adapts ye best to."

"Dosey-do."

"Twirl the ninepin."

"Balance through the middle."

"See the wave av her hoofs."

He did not mean that his wife should overhear his praises.

But trust a woman's ear.

Despite the music she heard them all.

She had meant to be as dignified as possible, but aluding to her feet as hoofs was too much for any proper-spirited female pride.

Disengaging herself from the embrace of Monsieur Boncheer with a force that sent him sprawling on the floor, she rushed at her husband with uplifted fist.

"Call me feet hoofs, ye unmannerly dressed-up baboon!" she cried, as she made a reach for his hair.

"The oidea av yez spaking loike that to me!"

McGuinness made a dodge.

It was successful.

He placed a sofa between himself and his enraged wife.

Mr. Skitts sprung hastily forward.

He placed himself between the two.

"Mrs. McGuinness," he said, in grave accents, "I am surprised!"

His words caused her to stop.

Unwillingly, though.

With flashing eyes she questioned:

"Did not ye hear what the baboon spoke about me?"

"I did."

"Thin ye wondher at me flying at him? Its scalp him I should."

Mr. Skitts knew how to manage her.

"You must excuse him," he said, in a low tone of voice meant only for her ears, "but of course Mac does not know etiquette. I will have to lecture him on the subject."

Mrs. McGuinness was mollified.

But as she returned to her chair she muttered:

"If it wur I, not he, that wur giving the lecthure, I wud not fool away me toime in wurruds. I'd use a poker."

Poor Monsieur Boncheer was so surprised at the tumble which he had received.

So surprised that he remained upon the floor, resting upon his elbows, and gazing helplessly up.

As for the wild-eyed man, he at first evinced an intention to flee when he beheld his superior toppled over, but checking it, he picked him up.

The dancing-master tottered to a seat.

He looked imploringly at Mr. Skitts.

That worthy caught the look, and made a rapid pantomime.

It was sufficient.

It was understood.

Monsieur Boncheer arose from his chair with a face all smiles.

He made directly for Mrs. McGuinness.

"Vun million pardongs, madame," he uttered, in regular molasses-tinctured accents. "It vas ze fault of me stupid booby. My foot must have caught in ze train of ze dress."

Well content to accept the verbal subterfuge, she made as gracious a reply as she could under the circumstances.

"Accidents will happen," answered she; "but if ye plaze, I think we will discontinue the dancing-lessons for the day."

"Wid all me heart," expressed McGuinness; "if I wur forced to dance around in these distressed boggans any more I wud be crippled for life."

Making the remark, he caught hold of one of his maligned foot-coverings.

Mr. Skitts beheld the action.

"For Heaven's sake, McGuinness," he demanded, "what are you at?"

"Ye have eyes, have ye not?" placidly responded McGuinness.

"Yes."

"Thin ye ought to use them. Can't ye see that I mane to enjoy meself in me socks for a whoile? Me feet are baked."

"You are a daisy!" sharply said Mr. Skitts. "You won't do nothing of the sort. Don't you want to sit in your shirt-sleeves and smoke a clay pipe?"

McGuinness desisted.

Somewhat crestfallen.

"It seems to me ye are awful particular," he muttered.

"Have to be with you," said Mr. Skitts; "didn't I promise to make one of the first gentlemen in the land out of you?"

"Yis."

"And this is what I get for it—ingratitude."

"For what?"

"Trying to learn you manners. Here you are kicking already."

"I ain't."

"I say you are, and for two cents I will throw you overboard altogether, hang me if I don't!"

The words were pronounced so fiercely that McGuinness trembled.

Lose Skitts!

Lose his social sheet-anchor!

Never!

He most humbly apologized, and Mr. Skitts chuckled to himself.

"That is your only plan, Byron, my boy—bully him."

A little while afterward they left for home, much to the relief of Monsieur Boncheer.

"Mon Dieu!" he ejaculated, with a roll of his eyes and a piteous shrug of his shoulders, "savages, curiosities!"

That afternoon McGuinness was introduced to his valet.

We have mentioned the English coachman John's appearance was calculated to inspire the most audacious with respect on account of his general solemnity.

The valet whom Mr. Skitts had secured for his patron was John's brother, Richard, who was the exact counterpart of John, only a little more solemn.

Richard was seated in the hall and McGuinness noticed him.

"Say," he asked of Mr. Skitts, after they reached his room, "is anybody dead?"

"Not to my knowledge," answered Mr. Skitts.

"Why?"

"What wur the undhertaker doing in the hall?"

"An undertaker?"

"Yis."

"What are you talking about? I didn't see any."

"Thin tell what it wur that wur sitting upon the big chair in the hall. I think he wur aloive, although maybe he moight have been carved."

Something akin to a chuckle escaped the other.

He knew what was in store for McGuinness.

McGuinness groaned.

His face expressed alarm.

"Do ye mane to tell me that obelisk that I beheld is to be me valet?"

"Yea."

"Dress me?"

"Yea."

"Shave me?"

"Certainly. He will assist you also in your bath every morning."

"I'll be shot if he will," rebelled McGuinness.

"Why not?"

"I'll have no valet loike him."

"What ails him?"

"I wud just as lave have a corpse around me person."

Mr. Skitts looked stern.

"All right; that ends our connection," he observed.

"I'm through with you, and I wash my hands of you. More ingratitude! Here I procure a valet whom I had to bribe to leave the services of a Prussian count—you see, I get you the finest of everything—and now you ain't satisfied. What kind of a valet do you want? A regular terrier, I suppose, some flannel-mouthed friend of yours, who would shave you with a shovel and give you a bath with a hose?"

Mr. Skitts buttoned up his coat and put on his hat.

He made a feint to draw on his gloves.

He wore gloves now—imported.

"Where are ye going?" asked McGuinness.

"To shake you forever. There is no use placing pearls before swine. I intend to go down-stairs and bounce the whole household."

"Bounce the whole household?" echoed McGuinness, in alarm.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Guinness."

"For what?"

"You are a fine one to run the servants whom you speak of. Good-bye."

Mr. Skitts made a move for the door.

This vanquished McGuinness.

He knew that he was at the mercy of his self-elected guardian.

"Hould on," he called.

Mr. Skitts pretended not to hear.

He made a step toward the door again.

The step was Lilliputian.

One of the mark-time species.

If he had kept it up he would have possibly found himself outside of the apartment in a couple of hours.

But his object was accomplished.

"Skitts," he bawled, "don't go off av yez handle. Come back."

The gentleman addressed hesitated—apparently?

"No, I won't," he soliloquized, but loud enough for McGuinness to hear.

Suddenly, as if seized by a fit of magnaminity, he turned.

"For the last time I will excuse you," he said, "but mark my elocution—Ion't you never do it again."

"Yes, sir, or else I would not be in your service now. He left me a handsome bequest and a mourning ring."

Richard arose in McGuinness' mental regard at this statement.

A valet who was bequested and mourning-ringed by a prince must prove a valuable acquisition to a man about to travel for pleasure.

"No wondher," sadly said McGuinness; "the shirts doubtless undhermoined his health, but the socks wur the extra straw which killed him. But av coarse if it is the proper thing I wud just as life change me socks forthy-nine toimes a day instead av four. Go ahead wid me toilet."

Mr. Skitts withdrew.

Then Richard proceeded to array his employer.

It was a horrible ordeal for the latter, more especially as he was about a head more diminutive than his servitor, and he had to stand upon a stool to be properly garbed.

He presented a picture of dismay.

Meanwhile Mr. Skitts, whose ideas of humor were rather forced, had gone down to the servants' hall.

There he threw off his restraint.

He cared nothing for them, all his tools.

"Come up and see the boss being togged out," he invited.

They did so.

The room where McGuinness was being appareled was one of a suite, the doors of which were ajar.

So it was that the grinning servants enjoyed the treat of watching McGuinness' agony under Richard's mischievous and by no means gentle manipulations of his garments.

PART III.

Mr. Skitts and his companions deeply enjoyed the suffering of McGuinness under the hands of his torturer, Richard the valet.

The fun for the lookers-on did not last long.

A servant girl imprudently giggled.

McGuinness heard her.

He turned his head just in time to catch a flying glimpse of fleeting forms.

"What does it mane, Richard?" he queried.

"What does what mean?" asked the stoical Richard.

"Me toilet has been beheld."

"Impossible, sir."

"But I am certhain that I heard a giggle and the soight av some wan fleeing."

"Could not be, sir. See for yourself; we are all alone."

"But I heard a giggle and the rustle av skirts."

"One of the chambermaids, no doubt, passing along the corridor."

McGuinness looked not quite satisfied at this plausible explanation.

"It may be so," he responded, "and it may be not; but after this era we will have all av the doors closed to prevent an audience."

"Yes, sir," gravely said Richard, and the toilet proceeded.

When McGuinness was done he was a daisy, being arrayed in the fullest of full dress.

"Bedad!" he exclaimed, as he gazed admiringly at himself in a pier-glass, "I wud give fifty dollars if the gang on the rocks could behould me now. It wud be unnerved for a week at the soight av me splendor. Afther all, I am not so bad looking."

"You have the bearing exactly of the Prince de Montmorency Baron de Saville," assured Richard, "and the prince was considered to have one of the finest figures in all Europe."

The flattery accomplished Richard's object.

Before he left the room he received a crisp bank-note.

McGuinness went down to show himself off to his family, proud as a peacock.

"Luk at me, Ellen," he said; "ain't ye proud av me? It is a regular dude that I am."

"Yis, ye do luk noise for ye," admitted Mrs. McGuinness, "but wait till ye see us at the table."

Truth to tell, the ladies were a sight to look upon. The unparalleled splendor of their get-up broke even the staid old butler all up, and he kept making all sorts of mistakes, actually pouring his master's champagne out in a finger-bowl, but it was all of the same, for McGuinness expressed his satisfaction on having his wine poured out in a "schooner-glass."

Well, Mr. Skitts kept them in New York until he succeeded in polishing them up a little.

Then he concluded it was time to steer them on their travels.

"To-morrow," he announced, "we start on our journey. Think what pleasure we will have if you are guided strictly in all things by me."

"Where are we bound for first?" asked McGuinness.

"Philadelphia."

"That's good. I have friends there. Me Wolfe's uncle runs a five-cint restaurant, and me Cousin Dennis kapes an elegant saloon. He calls it 'The Pie in the Wall,' I belave."

"We will call upon them the first thing," promised Mr. Skitts, inwardly vowing to do nothing of the sort.

Mr. Skitts had a keen sense of humor, and he meant to get all of the fun, as well as all of the money, he could out of the McGuinnesses.

"We go to the ferry in a carriage," he said. "What sort of a breed of vehicle would you prefer?"

"We'll go in our own, sure."

"Guess not."

"Why not?"

"I only hired the turnout, did I not, and I bounced it this afternoon."

"That's thre."

"Suppose you try the latest wrinkle?"

"What's that?"

"A Russian tandem."

"How is that kind av a carry-us got up?"

"It has got to be all of the rage lately. The Prince de Montmorency Baron de Saville was the originator of it."

"That settles it!" declared McGuinness. "I will have a Russian tandem or nothing."

Later in the evening Mr. Skitts hied himself around to a livery stable where he was acquainted.

He bowed familiarly to the proprietor, a red-faced man, with a perpetual straw in his mouth and a chronic state of dirty shirt.

"How goes it, Jackson?" asked he.

"Fairish," replied Mr. Jackson; "and you?"

"Oh, I'm all right."

"And the suckers?"

"They're fine as silk," smiled Mr. Skitts, for Jackson was a pal of the artful schemer, and knew all about the graft that he had on the deluded McGuinness.

"Now I want your help to put up a job on them."

"I'm with you, pard," expressed Jackson, chewing away at his straw. "What is it?"

"It's right in your line."

"Let her go!"

"I want a Russian tandem."

"A which?"

"Russian tandem."

"Never heard of it, and I don't believe that you ever did, nuther," commented Jackson, noticing a twinkle in his friend's eye.

Mr. Skitts grinned.

"Probably you did not," he said. "I am going to invent it and get it patented."

"When?"

"Right away—right here. Where is that old Coney Island, one-horse open barouche of yours?"

"What in thunder do you want of that crazy ark?"

"That's my business. Where is it?"

"Up in the loft."

"Then get a progress on you and lead on; I will follow you there."

They went up into the loft.

By the dim light of the lantern they viewed it.

It was a magnificent wreck.

A rickety, aged, one-horse open barouche in the last stages of dilapidation.

Mr. Skitts surveyed it with an air of content.

"That will do tip-top," he asserted.

"To split up inter kindling-wood," grunted Jackson, in puzzled tones. "Blessed if I get onto your lay. Why, the old hearse will drop apart afore she goes a mile."

"Not as bad as that, I guess," Mr. Skitts said. "We'll fix her so that she will carry the McGuinnesses in style befitting the noble descents of Irish kings that they are—God bless 'em."

Mr. Skitts proceeded to explain what he desired done.

His recital affected Jackson so that he sank down upon a bale of hay to recuperate.

"You don't mean it?" he gasped.

"Never was I firmer in any intention in my life," answered Mr. Skitts.

"You want it all rigged up with fancy cushions?"

"Yes."

"Buffalo robes?"

"Correct."

"Two big red sleighing-plumes on each side of the driver's box?"

"Oui."

"And you want a nigger coachman in full livery?"

"Fake up a regular stunner."

"A chime of bells, too?"

"Every time."

The proprietor of the equine hotel recuperated to a certain extent.

He arose from the bale of hay.

"Skitts," he remarked, as he gazed with something like envy at the other, "you have got a nerve."

"Thank you for the compliment, Jackson," rejoined the lawyer. "We will now speed our way to inspect the two blooded steeds I spoke about."

They returned to the lower floor.

Jackson gave a whistle.

In reply a couple of hatless, barefooted hostlers appeared from somewhere in the cellar.

"Bring out Prince and Beauty," ordered he.

They fled to execute his mandate, for he was not prone to treat his help with any extraordinary degree of kindness.

Soon they re-appeared with the two priceless quadrupeds called for.

They were cautious.

If they had ever been entered in a horse-show the roof of the building would have caved in on them.

Prince was a big white horse who could be almost seen through. He had a bobtail, or hardly any tail at all, hoofs like butcher's blocks, and any amount of other imperfections in the eyes of a veterinary surgeon.

And when he lifted his grand and imposing head he looked to be about eleven feet high.

The second animal was as valuable as the first.

She was a mean, miserable pony of about the size used in playing polo, named Beauty.

Mr. Skitts rubbed his hands together gleefully.

"They are pets!" he chuckled. "I tell you what, Jackson, when they get hitched up tandem, with Beauty in front and Prince in the shafts, they will make a sensation, eh?"

"Sensation?" repeated Jackson. "Well, I should say so."

A few minutes' more conversation, and Mr. Skitts left, first telling Jackson to follow his directions in

everything, and have the anomaly of an equipage at the McGuinness mansion in time to catch the train the following morning.

"Don't be afraid to sock it to Mac in the bill," were his last words, "and don't forget my divvy."

"Which you bet you won't fail to remind me of," muttered Jackson, as he spat out his nearly masticated straw, selected a fresh one for consumption, and watched Mr. Skitts' retreating figure with something akin to pride, for often rogues take a sneaking enjoyment in one another's success.

Meanwhile McGuinness had promptly reported to his family their approaching departure.

"And in ordher to move in a stoyle as befits our position," he interrogated, "what kind av a vehicle do ye suppose that I have chartered to wheel us to the ferry?"

"I hope, mar, he's got us a four-in-hand," ejaculated Teresa Evangeline. "They are so the mode."

"The mode."

"What's a mud?"

"Not a mud, par, but a monde. It is French for the height of style."

"And it is very pleased that I am to see ye dabbling in French already in yez talk," approved McGuinness. "It sounds quite English, ye know. But I am sorry, me dear, to wilt yez ambitions relative to displaying av yesilf in a four-in-hand in the bud. I have engaged no drab, but a Russian tandem."

All grew interested at once.

"Is that more chic than a four-in-hand?" spake Teresa Evangeline.

"Is that more av the language av the frog-aters?" her father inquired.

"Yes, par."

"And does it mane the same as 'mud,' or whatever ye said before?"

"Yes, par."

McGuinness proudly patted his eldest daughter upon the head.

"Kape at yez French, me colleen," he said, "and it is maybe an opera-cloak bedecked wid sealskin fur that I will give ye when the could weather comes."

"That is all right, par," persisted the young lady, "but I want to know what a Russian tandem is. You ain't told us yet."

Neither he had.

Good reason why.

He had not the faintest conception of the equipage.

"I won't," he answered, after a moment's hesitation.

"Do, par."

"Surprises are always pleasant, and I wish ye to clap yez hands wid glee when ye see the grandeur av our departure from our mansion."

Turning quickly on his heel to avoid further questioning, he left the room abruptly, thus getting out of his quandary.

The morrow came.

The servants who were to accompany our party were Richard,

"Skitts," he hoarsely said, "ye must take me for a fool, don't ye? I wud not roide in that—whatever it is—for a forthune. Begorra, hod-carriers wud lave their worruk to throw bricks at us, and small blame to them."

Mr. Skitts had expected the outbreak.

Fully equal to it was he.

Seizing his hat, he jammed it down fiercely over his ears.

"Richard?" he called to the valet.

Richard glided forward.

"Yes, sir," he said.

"Send the Russian tandem away instantly."

Then, soliloquizing, he continued:

"Serves me right. There is no use of casting pearls before swine. McGuinness, I wash my hands of you. Here, after I have procured you the last novelty in the way of vehicles—a vehicle all Murray Hill will be copy-

McGuinness felt that fate was against him. It gave him a lump in the throat to do it, but he apologized to Mr. Skitts, which apology that worthy condescended, after awhile, to accept.

They proceeded to the wonderful vehicle of locomotion.

The gazers-on set up a loud "hurray!"

Mr. Skitts turned this to his own advantage.

"Kick, will you?" he whimpered to his patron.

"See how they applaud!"

Into the Russian tandem piled the McGuinnesses.

Daniel excepted.

He had promised to meet them at the ferry.

"Speed her!" grinned Mr. Skitts.

The colored coachman woke up, and, with a crack of his whip, started off.

Another round of satirical applause greeted McGuinness' ears.

Especially as some admirer nearly knocked her flaring hat off with a tomato.

Her pimpled brow clouded.

"Mar," she said to Mrs. McGuinness, who was beginning to have doubts about the genuineness of their triumphal, "stop the wagon."

"Why?" queried her mother.

"I am going to get out."

"What for?"

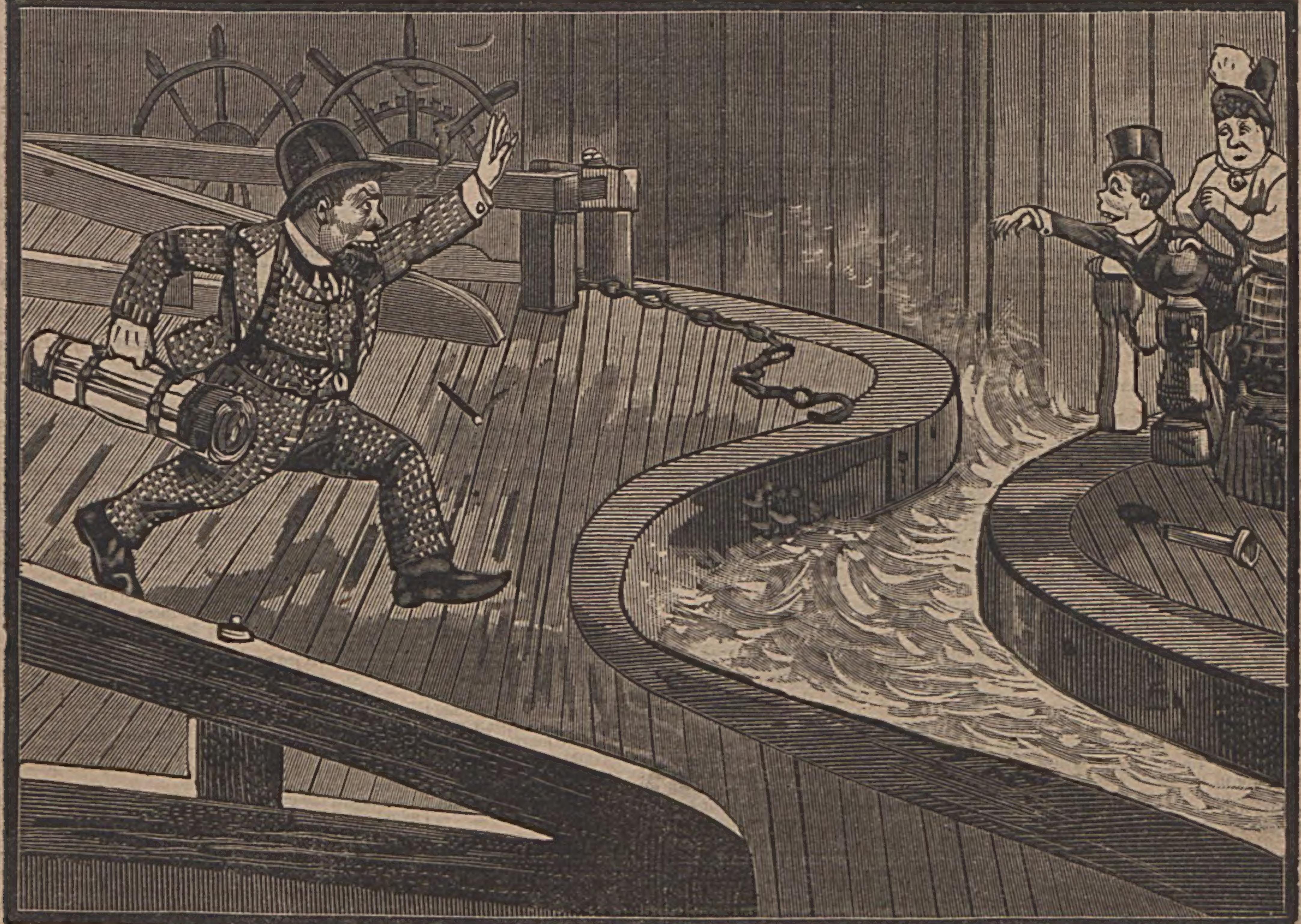
"This is awful."

"What is?"

"Can't you see that nasty Skitts man has played a joke on par?"

"How?"

"With his Russian tandem, as he calls it. This is disgraceful. Next thing we will all be arrested as lunatics. Why, we can hardly get along on account of the crowd."



Eluding a gate-man, who tried to stop him, he rushed frantically along the ferry-bridge after the boat, which had already moved out in the stream. "Hould on!" yelled McGuinness, as he beheld his family in the rear of the boat. "Stop her, I ain't aboard!"

ing to-morrow—you kick about it. It's natural, I suppose; water will return to its natural level. The kind of a carriage that would suit you would be an ash-cart drawn by a mule. Do as I told you, Richard."

Richard did not.

Mr. Skitts played his part so well that the gullible McGuinness was taken in.

"Hould on," he said, "don't foire up in that way."

Mr. Skitts looked the picture of insulted dignity.

"It was you, not me, who, to use your elegant expression, 'fired up,'" he said. "What were your remarks, I should like to know, relative to the tandem? Understand, Mr. McGuinness, I am a gentleman, not a menial. The services which I had intended to render you were not prompted solely on account of pecuniary motives, but principally by friendship. I'm off," and he made an elaborate move to depart.

"Don't go, Mr. Skitts," appealed Teresa Evangeline. "Par, ain't you ashamed of yourself, after all Mr. Skitts has done for you, to talk to him like that?"

Mrs. McGuinness was looking out upon the tandem. It was surrounded by a numerous crowd of spectators, all, needless to say, guying it.

She believed in Mr. Skitts, and took his words for gospel.

She, too, turned on her unfortunate husband, for she thought, poor woman, that the crowd were all admiring their conveyance.

"Mike!" she uttered, sharply, "ye betther be still. Hould yez whist; I intind to go to the ferry in that tandem."

"I, too," said Teresa Evangeline.

"And me!" concerted the twins.

He took it for the genuine article.

"Ah, ha, Mrs. McGuinness," he complacently said, seated on the back seat of the barouche; "I wronged Skitts, for he wur roight, after all. This is what I call thraveling for playasure."

PART IV.

NEEDLESS to say the Russian tandem created a furore along the street.

People did not know what in the world to make of it, and asked one another all sorts of questions.

"What does it mean?"

"The man must be crazy."

"Or else it is simply some sort of an advertising scheme for somebody's soap or bitters."

"Look at the horses!"

"Stag the coon on the box."

"But the old Turk himself he is boss."

"What are you thinking of? Get onto the old gal."

So they cried, while the twins and Teresa Evangeline came in for their full share of attention, any amount of kisses being thrown at them, and "ah, theres!" wasted upon the breeze by any amount of tramps and dirty-faced boys.

At first McGuinness enjoyed the sensation that he was creating.

"It is a sensathion that we are creatheing," he remarked. "Hear how the people go woid over us. Hear them applaud. Arrah, but this is the way to thravel, regular aristocratic. None av yez put-yez own-fares-in-the box business!"

Teresa Evangeline did not coincide in his views.

Thus appealed to by her offspring, Mrs. McGuinness gave her husband a kick.

"Mike," she said, "hit the naygur in the back wid yez cane and tell him to stop."

"And why?" interrogated McGuinness, who was not feeling, truth to tell, at all at ease himself.

"We mane to get out."

"For what rayson?"

At this moment an egg which did not feel very well splashed its contents on McGuinness' hat.

"There is a rayson for ye," uttered Mrs. McGuinness. "Don't ye see that we are making a howly show out av ourselves for the benefit av this coterie av loafers around us. Skitts has done it for fun, I suppose, and if I foind out that he has I will make his head luk as if it had been played wid by a wold-cat."

McGuinness started.

He looked as black as a pirate flag.

"If I thought so," he cried, "I wud wring his neck for him."

He started to poke the charioteer with his cane, but he was spared the trouble.

Abruptly the vehicle came to a check.

A howl of delight arose from those gathered about the tandem.

They had cause for mirth.

Or thought they had, which was all the same to them.

Good reason why.

Prince had stopped short.

He exhibited every sign of an attack of blind-staggers, which pleased the lookers-on greatly.

They applauded the animal's performances.

"Bleed him!"

"Give him air!"

"Take his harness off!"

"Throw water on his head!"

"Stick him with a knife!"

"Shoot him, rather!"

McGuinness felt that he had got enough of the circus.

With a violent kick he opened the door of the brougham, which door being held on only by a couple of slight hinges, was sent spinning into the street.

"Come after me, all av yez," he fiercely said. "Oh, ho! but wait till I get hould av that dirthy lawyer. Maybe he thought it wur a good joke on us, but he will find out different. Whin a McGuinness' pride is insulted he delays at naught. It is kill Skitts off-hand will I," and the irate speaker descended, followed by his family, amidst the cheers of those surrounding.

"Hold on, boss!" yelled the sable coachman, with a malicious grin; "are youse gwine fo' to move off?"

"Yis," growled McGuinness.

"But hold on, I tolle youse."

"What for?"

"Dis gray hoss am sick."

"I wish he wur dead."

"He's got de staggers."

"I don't care if he's got a sun-stroke too."

"He ain't fit to trabble, and what am I gwine fo' to do wid de tandem?"

McGuinness, to his credit, let it be said, was not a profane man.

That vice was lacking in his composition.

There are occasions, though, that turn saints into temporary sinners.

McGuinness felt that this was one of them.

With something like an oath—and the chances are that it was—he flung a dollar to the coon.

"Drove it off av the dock for all that I care," responded McGuinness, as he hurriedly departed with his home-circle, followed by jeers.

He walked so swiftly that his family could not keep up with him.

Mrs. McGuinness pantingly called out:

"Molke!"

"What?" came the response.

"Stop—we ain't on wheels."

McGuinness knitted his brows.

"For two clints wid I have ye crows to yez fate, and never lessen me cyclone-like speed until I make a corpse out av Skitts. The idea av his daring to expose me to the ignominy av the rabble and ye selves besides—not to speake av me hat, which is ruint entirely on account av the collision it incurred wid the egg."

Nevertheless, he cessated his speed and they gained his side.

Mr. Skitts would not have felt much flattered if he could have overheard the comments made on his conduct.

They called him all the names they could think of, fairly exhausting their vocabulary of epithets, and then cooled off a little.

But not much.

Very slightly.

And while in this mood, whom should they meet coming around a corner but Ruby Porker, Esquire, who, it will be remembered, was the pettifogger and schemer in the same law office of which Mr. Skitts was an exotic, and who had been described by Mr. Skitts at various times as nothing less than a fiend incarnate.

"Have nothing to do with the adder," was usually the concluding part of his remarks.

However, when Ruby Porker was encountered he did not look much like an adder.

Or, if he did, the species of adder which he resembled must have been a harmless one.

He had struck luck some way or another, and he was a good deal better dressed than when we introduced him to our readers in our first chapter.

Broadcloth clothed him, his cranium was surrounded by a glossy silk tile, his shoes, overgaithered, were a marvel in the way of a shine, and he escorted a gold-headed cane.

He was smoking a fragrant cigar, and a red rose exhaled its fragrance in the lapel of the close-fitting Prince Albert coat.

He recognized the McGuinnesses at once.

His heart jolted joyfully.

Here was his golden opportunity.

He grabbed it, for this was the first time that he had seen them without Mr. Skitts being in their wake.

"Mr. McGuinness!" he exclaimed, as he lifted his hat with a grace which was truly Chesterfieldian, "delighted I am, sure, almost paralyzed with joy, to behold you. This is indeed a rare, rich pleasure, and—"

He broke off.

He noticed that the McGuinnesses did not have the appearance of being perfectly happy.

"You seem perturbed," he continued. "There is gloom visible amongst you. Something must have occurred, surely, to disturb the serenity of your temperament. Excuse my curiosity."

McGuinness was riled enough to disregard Mr. Skitts' injunction relative to having anything to do with the gentleman whom he now had met.

"It is more than perturbed, as ye calls it, that I am," he answered, with gritted teeth. "It is bolling over wid wrath am I."

"You have been put out!" said Ruby Porker, in his sweetest tone.

"I have, indade. Wait till I catch him."

"Who?"

"The scoundrel who has made a monkey out av me."

Ruby Porker was all attention.

Skitts was absent from the group.

Possibly there might have been a falling out.

If so, now was his chance to take advantage of events.

"May I inquire," he queried, "if it is not taking too much of a liberty, what might the name of the scoundrel you allude to be?"

"Ye know him," growled McGuinness.

"I do."

"Yis; ye saw him wid me."

"I did?"

"Yis."

"Where?"

"At me house. Ye wur both together."

If Ruby Porker's heart had jolted for joy before, it now threatened to jolt worse than ever.

His suspicion was right.

Skitts and the McGuinnesses must be at daggers-points.

But from his face you could not judge of his inward elation.

"Skitts, bad cess to him," rejoined McGuinness.

Ruby Porker looked solemn.

Solemn, almost, as a marble monument when viewed in the snowy moonlight of a winter's night.

"Skitts!" he repeated indifferently.

"That is the rapparee."

Ruby Porker coughed.

An embarrassed cough, as if he did not care to discuss the topic further.

"You must excuse me, Mr. McGuinness," he said, "but I have no desire to talk about Skitts."

"Why?" asked McGuinness.

"To say the least, we are not friends."

At this reply McGuinness' face showed a breaking of the clouds upon it.

In his present mood he was willing to walk hand in glove with any one in order to get square on Skitts.

"Are ye enemies?" he eagerly asked.

Ruby Porker considered it best for his policy to avoid answering for a few seconds.

Then he seemed to have made up his mind to confide in McGuinness.

"Mr. McGuinness," he observed in trusty accents, "you are a man of honor!"

McGuinness drew himself proudly up.

"Unnecessary to ask the question," he said, "and I can lick any man under me soize who dares to doubt me voracity."

As if assured that the speaker was a man of honor, Ruby Porker went on:

"What I reveal to you now you must never unbreast yourself to any one."

"I will not," promptly promised McGuinness.

"If the gallows had its due, Skitts would have been dangling from it long ago."

"He wud?"

"Yes, sir."

"Shure wherefore?"

"He is a villain of the deepest dye. I have persona grounds for making the assertion. He swindled me who picked him up, when he was in the gutter, a mere keg squeezer, out of twenty thousand dollars. But I thought I discerned talent in him, and so I gave him a helping hand. How did he requite me? Sometimes it seems to me that the Good Samaritan was simply a fool. How did the Good Samaritan know but what the sick man was shamming and simply playing off illness, so that he could knock him down with a piece of lead-pipe, so that he could go through his clothes? I found out, however, that I had not been mistaken in one thing."

"An' what was that?"

"He did have talent, but talent of a sort which makes murderer-out of men. Mr. McGuinness, are you bound for any objective point?"

"Yis."

"Where?"

"To the ferry."

"Which one?"

"The Pennsylvania wan. We wur to meet Skitts there. We are going to Philadelphia."

"Just what I thought," gravely said Ruby Porker.

"Do you know his object in taking you there?"

"He said it wur for pleasure," replied McGuinness, impressed by the way in which Ruby Porker spoke his words.

"Pleasure!" exclaimed Ruby Porker, with a dramatic start which had its due effect on those who heard him. "Have you read the papers lately?"

As it was as much as McGuinness could do to read his own name, he was obliged to confess that the perusal of journals had not helped consume much of his time.

"Even worse than I imagined," deplored Mr. Porker. "Do you know his object in taking you to Philadelphia?"

"I do not."

"It is because it is a hot-bed."

"A hot-bed?"

"Yes. And what can you imagine it is a hot-bed of?"

"Flowers."

"No."

"What thin?"

"Smallpox!"

It was McGuinness' turn to start.

"Smallpox!" he ejaculated.

"Yes," lied Ruby Porker, "and it is of the most virulent type."

"And what is that?"

"The black. One dies in five hours after catching it. See the deep depths of Skitts' depravity! Are you vaccinated?"

"No."

"He has probably found that out and the disease is raging violently. The death-rate, so I read this very morning, averages ninety deaths per day. He intends

exposing you to contagion and then stealing all of your money."

McGuinness became a picture of horror at this idea, never reflecting that in reality he had never visited the lawyer's office at all, the funds for his expenditures having been advanced by Mr. Skitts.

"I belave it," he uttered. "After the thrick he played me wid raygard to what he called a Russian tandem, I can belave anything av him. What shall I do?"

"Skitts was to meet you at the ferry for Philadelphia?"

"So I tould ye."

"Here is how we can discomfit him: don't go near the ferry at all. Shake him altogether. You can do it easily."

"How?"

"There are two ferries to Jersey City via the Pennsylvania Railroad."

"Yis."

"At Courtlandt and Desbrosses streets!"

"I think ye are right."

"Which one did you promise to meet him at?"

"Courtlandt."

"Dodge him."

"How?"

"Go to the Desbrosses Street Ferry. You have the checks for your trunks, have you not?"

By some oversight McGuinness had been allowed to possess himself of these very useful metal tags by Mr. Skitts.

"I have," he promptly replied.

"That settles it. His duplicity should be repaid to the fullest extent. We will at once go to the Desbrosses Street Ferry."

Mr. McGuinness blushed.

In anticipation of meeting Mr. Skitts, who carried the hoodie, his finances were very limited, as he only had a couple of dollars in his pocket.

"Faix," blurted out McGuinness, "it is almost dead bhrone that I am for ready cash."

"Don't let that bother you," and Ruby Porker slapped his pants pockets with emphasis. "I have plenty of the filthy lucre. To Desbrosses Street Ferry at once."

Thither they proceeded.

In the ferry-house McGuinness loitered behind to buy some cigars, while the rest walked onto the boat, which was in the slip.

It took McGuinness quite a while to choose his cigars. More especially as he could not really tell a Henry Mud from a Henry Clay, and consequently was very particular what he smoked.

The first thing he knew he heard a rattle of chains. The ferry-boat must be going off.

Eluding a gate-man, who tried to stop him, he rushed frantically along the ferry-bridge after the boat, which had already moved out in the stream.

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But she kept her eyes upon the spot where the water had closed over her husband. Her clutch upon the legal gentleman was relaxed as suddenly as it had been bestowed. "Saved!" she cried, as she beheld the bold McGuinness show up above the waves. True enough, the object of her remarks was visible. And it was evident, from the vigorous way in which he grabbed the nearest life-preserved, that he did not intend to become food for the fishes just yet, not of his own accord.

He showed himself something of a hog. One life-preserved would not do him. Somehow he managed to connect himself with three, and as he got two of them tangled about his feet, he might have been drowned were it not that other succor was at hand.

"Roll him over a barrel." "Stand him on his head." "Pound his stomach." "Beat his back." So they cried as they clustered about McGuinness. Of all the proposed remedies for his resuscitation, that of rolling him over a barrel seemed to catch the popular vote.

Two or three men came down the ferry-bridge with barrels, procured where or how we are sure we cannot tell.

The first barrel-engineer to arrive at McGuinness' prostrate and dripping form grabbed the gentleman who was traveling for pleasure (?) and at once proceeded to roll him over his barrel.

He did not lack for aid. Volunteers were numerous.

way, and he will lend you a suit of clothes while yours are a-dryin'."

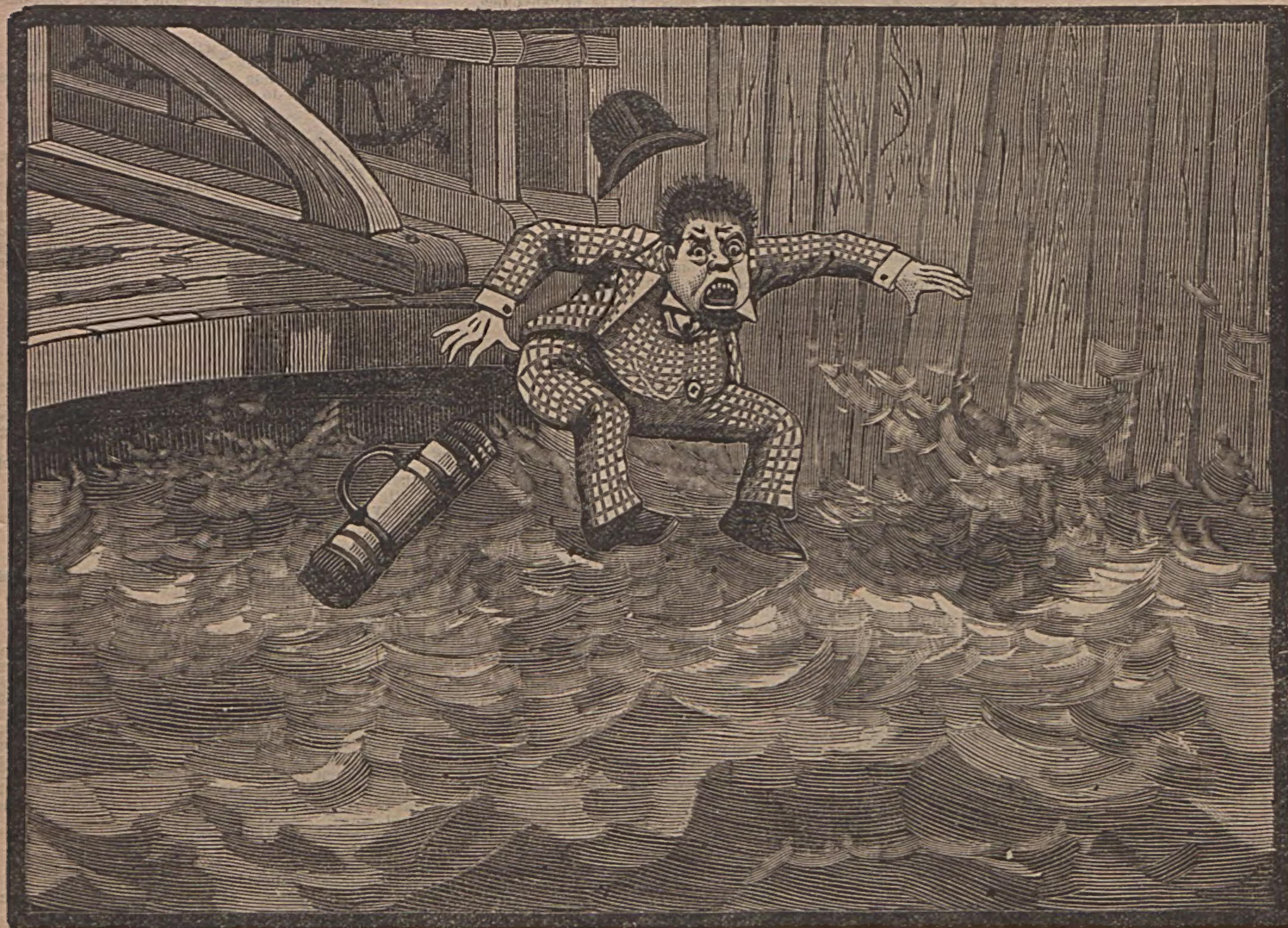
The proposal was eagerly accepted, and McGuinness invited all hands to have a drink at his expense, which was accepted with alacrity.

The saloon was soon found.

Also the friendly barkeeper, who professed himself only too willing to loan his garments.

"Only," he said, with a grin, "you must not kick if they don't fit you," for the barkeeper was a tall, lanky individual.

"Anything will do, for I want to get these wet clothes off av me as soon as I can, for it is a howly horror I have av catching cowld, for consumphion runs in our family. Me sister-in-law wur always coughing, and she wud widout doubt have died av it,



The attempt to rejoin his family proved an ignominious failure. He went up into the air like a sort of Irish spread-eagle for a little distance, and then his momentum ceasing, went down into the water like a shot.

The ferry bridge-master threw him a line.

"Catch hold, for your life!" bawled his rescuer.

The line was flung truly.

It landed on McGuinness' chest, and he grabbed it, discarding the first life-preserved, for he did not need that one.

The other two and the line ought to get him ashore somehow.

His clench upon that line could almost be called a dying man's grip.

Willing hands, meanwhile, had assisted the line-thrower.

McGuinness was yanked to the ferry-bridge, and he presented a most comical sight as he cleaved through the foam incited by his rapid passage, for the men at the other end of the line were men of biceps and inspired with a laudable desire to save a fellow being's life.

Indeed, they brought him up in their well meant zeal with such a force against a pile that it was a wonder his skull was not crushed.

It would have been, probably, if it was an ordinary skull, but his was constructed something like a cobble-stone.

As it was he was only simply dazed a little.

The next minute he was pulled up by a couple of boat-hooks wielded by two enthusiastic saviors, and he was a sight to see as they pulled him up out of the water, for each man, as generally is the case, pulled different ways, and McGuinness stood a fair chance of being split in twain.

They dumped him upon the ferry-bridge.

There was a babel in a twinkie.

"Give him air."

McGuinness' clothes were almost torn off of him by the energetic efforts of the self-constituted life-saving service.

They lifted him upon the barrel, and were about to roll him, when he found his tongue.

"Bad cess to yez sowlis, yez spalpeens!" he shouted, as they held him partially suspended in the air.

"What do ye mane?"

It was almost like a voice from the grave, for their intent was perfectly sincere.

They thought that he was unconscious.

At the sound of his voice one and all, aghast at his reproach, dropped him as if actuated by a simultaneous impulse.

He struck on the barrel, which was dangerously near the ferry-bridge, and the barrel began to speed toward the river.

It is not unlikely that he might have been thrown off into the waves again had it not been that one of the men with the boat-hooks had not yet relinquished his.

He made a lunge at McGuinness.

His attempt was successful.

The hook caught in the widest portion of McGuinness' nether garment, and the other, who was a big, Herculean fellow, held him suspended in the air, while the barrel made its exit into the current.

Assured that he had captured McGuinness, he let him drop with a thud upon the planks, and then kindly picked him up and stood him on his feet.

McGuinness felt duly thankful to his rescuers, and asked them where he could get a change of clothing.

The man with the boat-hook made answer:

"My brother's a barkeeper in the s'llo' 'cross the

had it not been that she met her ind undher the wheels av a coal-cart."

The barkeeper laughed and took McGuinness into the "private office," where his saturated garments were exchanged for the barkeeper's raiment.

The result was so ludicrous that the barkeeper and his brother could not help laughing.

They were perfectly justified in so doing.

McGuinness did look comical in his new duds.

His pants reached nearly up to his chin, and his coat-tails flapped about his heels. The barkeeper did not have an extra pair of shoes, so he lent McGuinness his slippers, which were about a mile too big for him.

Now he was all rigged out, with the exception of a hat, his own being by this time on its way to Eu-rope.

This want was supplied soon.

The rummaging of a closet disclosed a high white hat, with a black band around it, which looked as if it had been in one or two riots and gone on several target excursions.

The barkeeper straightened it out as well as he could, saying apologetically as he clapped it upon McGuinness' head:

"It ain't a dandy, but it will keep you from taking cold."

He then deposited McGuinness in an easy-chair and wheeled a table up to him.

"I'll bring in something hot, and soon you will be all right," he said.

He was better than his word, for besides the "something hot" he also brought a cigar.

"Just you sit there and take things easy," he ad-

monished, "until you get your clothes dry. If you want anything—why, just holler."

McGuinness felt deeply touched at the kindness of the two brothers.

Mortified also was he.

He had possessed, as we said before, but a couple of dollars when he fell in the river, and when he was pulled out even that was gone.

"Byes," he said, with something like a blush. "I am sorry that I am dead broke at present, or I wud raycompense ye well for yez hospitality."

The two brothers looked insulted.

"Look here, mister," said the barkeeper, speaking for the two, "we ain't them kind of ducks. What we've done for you we would have done even if you hadn't been ablaze with diamonds."

"Then I can only thank yez," replied McGuinness.

(En passant, he did a good deal more. Soon afterward he made each of them a handsome present, nor did he forget to reward the man who had thrown him the line.)

Despite the "something hot," the easy-chair, and his cigar, his thoughts were not at all cheerful.

He was in a nice fix.

There he was anchored in a West street saloon, not a penny in his pocket, and worried about his family, for he had learned that the pilot of the ferry-boat, after seeing that he had been rescued, had continued his way to the Jersey shore.

"It is a noice box I am in," he soliloquized. "I will have to spout me clock, shure."

He was spared the necessity, however.

Meantime, Mr. Skitts was impatiently waiting at the Courtlandt Street Ferry, in company with Daniel and the servants.

A half hour passed—plenty of time in which to make McGuinness' trip.

When an hour elapsed he fairly fumed.

He strode up and down the floor, biting fiercely at his cigar.

Despite his indignation at their non-appearance, Mr. Skitts could not help blaming himself.

"Serves me right," he muttered. "I had no business to do any funny business. I wonder what has become of that infernal tandem, anyway?"

The last syllable was scarcely muttered before a fellow-shyster of Mr. Skitts' came along.

He stopped as he beheld Byron.

He appeared surprised.

"Hello, Skittsy, my son," he saluted; "what are you doing here?"

"Waiting for the McGuinnesses."

The other appeared more surprised than ever.

"If that is the case," he said, with eyes wide open, "you will have to wait a good while."

"I-will?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"The last I saw of that lamb of yours he was being fished out of the North river."

"Nonsense!"

"Fact."

"But how did he get in the river?"

"Jumped off of a ferry-boat."

"What was he doing on the ferry-boat?"

"How can you expect me to know?"

"True. What ferry was it?"

"Desbrosses street."

A vague suspicion came into Mr. Skitts' head.

"Was he alone?" he eagerly asked.

"No."

"Who was with him?"

"His family—and, come to think of it, Porker—you know Ruby Porker, you must know Ruby—was along with the family."

"Where were they in the river, too?" savagely asked Mr. Skitts, gritting his teeth.

"No, on the ferry-boat. You need not worry about them. The ferry-boat did not turn back to behold what came of him."

The words were like daggers to Mr. Skitts.

Ruby Porker in the possession of his prey!

He felt like tearing his hair, and berated himself soundly for ever having allowed them out of his custody for a moment.

He gnawed at his finger-nails as he mused what was best to do.

Gradually his face cleared.

His informant had told him that only Porker and the female McGuinnesses were on the ferry-boat.

Therefore McGuinness must be on shore in New York.

Mr. Skitts felt a good deal relieved.

"Porker, confound him!" he said, "can run away with the old woman and the kids for all that I care. All that I want is McGuinness himself."

Mr. Skitts was a good reasoner.

Shrewdly he reasoned that he would find McGuinness somewhere or another waiting for his clothes to dry, and, knowing that gentleman's habits, where would be the first place to look for him?

It was a question easily answered.

In the nearest saloon, naturally.

"Come, Danny," he said to the young heir of the McGuinnesses, "get a move on you, and we will set out to find your father."

They hired a cab outside of the ferry-house, and Mr. Skitts drove at once to Desbrosses street.

Alighting from the cab, the two entered a saloon.

Mr. Skitts was in luck.

Saloons in the vicinity of the ferry are almost as thick as hops, but Fate willed that the first one they entered chanced to be the one in which McGuinness was ensconced.

Walking up to the bar, he looked around.

No McGuinness in view.

He ordered a couple of sodas, and then accosted the barkeeper.

"Been any accident around here?" he queried. The barkeeper smiled.

"A little one," he said. "Old gent thought he had wings on his feet, and tried to jump aboard a ferry-boat which was 'way across to Jersey almost, and he tumbled into the swim. He got fished out, though, and he's all right now. He's in the private office recuperating."

As these words fell upon Mr. Skitts' ears he could have hugged that barkeeper.

What unexpected good fortune!

McGuinness right under his thumb!

"I suppose," he said to the barkeeper, "we might take a squint at the victim. I might know him."

The man in the white jacket nodded.

"Do so," he replied. "You might cheer him up. He looks as if he needed it."

Briskly Mr. Skitts walked to the private office. It was shut.

He rapped on the door.

There was silence for a minute.

Then a melancholy voice uttered:

"Come in."

Mr. Skitts and Danny entered.

There sat McGuinness in his arm-chair, arrayed in his wonderful clothes, his head buried in his hands, and his hat pushed back from his forehead.

The sigh was so dismally funny that it was as much as Mr. Skitts could do to control his risibles.

Danny did not attempt such a facial feat.

He gave vent to a regular horse-laugh.

"Oh, what a looking sausage!" he roared. "You ought to get stuffed."

Elevating himself to his full height, Mr. Skitts struck an attitude, and in tones akin to a judge sentencing a criminal to death, he pointed his magnetic finger at McGuinness and interrogated:

"Michael McGuinness, ingrate that you are, dare you look me in the face?"

PART VI.

At the sound of Mr. Skitts' voice McGuinness collapsed utterly.

He became a sort of helpless heap in the easy-chair, for he would have just as lieve expected beholding the ghost of his grandmother as the lawyer.

In fact, he was struck dumb, and silence reigned for a few moments, until Danny broke out again:

"Oh, dad, if you ain't a darling! Just lemme go round to the photograph-gallery and have a feller come and nail your picture. Where did you get that ice-cream dicer? You ought to harpoon it."

"That will do, Daniel," sternly admonished Mr. Skitts. "Don't render the poor wretch more miserable by scoffing at him."

Daniel subsided.

For a little while longer Mr. Skitts stood like a statue, the more to impress McGuinness.

McGuinness was impressed.

He could howl about the artful pettifogger when that worthy was away, but when it came to meeting him face to face it was altogether different.

He felt himself possessed of about as much courage as a white mouse, and jammed his prize chapeau over his eyes in a reckless way.

Seeing his object accomplished, Mr. Skitts spoke for the second time.

"This is gratitudine," he ironically uttered—"this is how I am requited for trying to make a silk purse out of a hog's ear. What have you to say for yourself?—what possible apology to offer for not meeting me at the ferry as promised? Come, sirrah, speak up!"

Mr. Skitts spoke so fiercely as he concluded that McGuinness was afraid he was going to be hit, and whined out:

"Lave me alone!"

Mr. Skitts' air was one of the scornfullest as he made answer.

"Poor fool—deluded Celt," he said, "do not fear that I would so far forget myself as a gentleman to offer you personal violence, although it would serve you right, seeing the provocation I have received, if I should break your back for you!"

McGuinness was fearful that the speaker might forget that he was a gentleman, and change his mind in regard to the back-breaking, so he faltered forth:

"Skitts?"

"What is it?" queried Mr. Skitts, in tones of thunder.

"It's all yez fault."

"What is it?"

"Us being here and the ould woman and the kids across the river."

"Are your wife and your children alone upon the other side of the river?"

McGuinness quailed at the eagle glance with which the question was accompanied.

"No-o," he stammered.

"You had company?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

"Porker," faintly articulated McGuinness.

The lawyer gave a theatrical start, a trick of which he was very fond.

"Great heavens!" he cried, as he clawed with one hand at the air, "your treachery becomes more vile. Did not I warn you against that legal freebooter?"

"Yis. What ails Porker?—he seems to me to be a very pleasant-spoken man."

"Likewise was the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Out of common humanity's sake, I am thankful that you have escaped his clutches; for woe to any one who falls into his clutches. My heart aches for them."

"For who?"

"Your heart should ache, too."

"Why?"

"Think of your wife and offspring in the power of that monster with no help at hand."

He spoke so impressively that McGuinness grew alarmed.

He woke up a little.

He sat bolt upright in his chair.

"Why should me heart ache for them?" asked McGuinness.

"On account of Porker. You have no idea of how his whole being is steeped in crime. They are alone with him, poor creatures?"

"Yis, if he ain't jumped overboard asther me."

"No danger. Do you know what he will do with them?"

"What?"

"He won't waste time bothering about you."

"Thin what will he do?"

"Mrs. McGuinness and the ladies have on their diamonds, have they not?"

"Yis."

"Your wife has money with her?"

"She carries a boddle."

"I tremble for them, for in my mind's eye I can see just what he will do with them."

"Ye do?"

"I do."

"Don't kape me in suspense."

"In the first place he will hire a carriage on the Jersey side."

"Shure, he don't mane to take him to Philadelphia in a hack, does he?"

"No. But he will plausibly tell them a yarn about the necessity of their repairing to a neighboring hotel, thbre to wait while he goes after you and brings you baek. The carriage will be driven by an accomplice of his, for he is a member of one of the most criminal bands in America."

"Ye don't say so!"

"On my word. But list!"

"I am."

"No?"

"He will not drive them to any hotel."

"No. He will put them in the vehicle, tell the driver, as a blind, to drive to some fictitious hotel. The driver will say 'All right,' and Porker, lifting his hat, will bid them adieu. He will climb upon the box with the other assassin."

McGuinness' hair stood on end at the mention of the word assassin.

He repeated it.

"What assassin do ye mane?" he asked.

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"Control yourself, my dear madam. There is no necessity of you crossing the river."

"But I want to be at his side."

"I will bring him to your side."

"At wanst?"

"At once. Here we are in the slip."

Sure enough, the boat had arrived at the other side, and Ruby Porker, telling his companions to follow him, led the way from the craft.

He steered them into the waiting-room and sat them down.

"You just set here and I will bring Mr. McGuinness here by the next boat," he said, as he lifted his hat and turned to depart.

But he did not depart.

The air of the waiting-room was very close and oppressive.

"I'm—I'm so sick—I'm—" she began.

"That'll do," admonished Porker; "the first thing you know those precious sisters of yours will be flopping over. Your mother is all right; see, she is coming around already."

He spoke the truth.

Three or four bottles of ammonia poked under her nose by good Samaritans quickly brought her to.

Therefore, Teresa Evangeline decided to postpone taking leave of her senses, and proceeded to inform her sisters, who were shrieking frantically, that their mother was in no immediate danger of becoming a corpse.

Mrs. McGuinness slowly opened her eyes.

"Where am I?" she asked.

"Safe," panted her supporter, whose spinal column was almost broken from the weight of her fairy-like form. "Can't you please try, madam, to exert

Mrs. McGuinness would not have it.

She closed her eyes again.

"I wish ye wud remain," she whispered. "Don't leave me all unprotected."

This piteous appeal touched the hearts of the semi-nine part of the group.

They glared at Ruby Porker as if he were a monster.

"Well, I never!"

"Shame!"

"Brute!"

"Just like a man!"

"Heartless!"

"He ought to be hung!"

"She might die the next minute!"

Such were some of their ejaculations.

That settled it.

Ruby Porker saw that he was in for it.



"Let go their heads!" he ordered of the boys who held the horses' heads. "Get up!" The boys obeyed, and the horses, freed, started off at a lively gait. Oh, it was a sight to see the bold McGuinnesses going clattering down the street, the pictures of agony.

And Mrs. McGuinness had really experienced a severe shock to her nervous system.

These two causes probably account for what followed.

Suddenly Mrs. McGuinness tottered from her seat and reeled across the floor to Porker with staring eyes and outstretched arms.

"Catch me!" she gasped, "I'm going to faint!"

With that she toppled over in a swoon.

Ruby Porker barely managed to catch her.

She was a large woman, and it was as much as he could do to brace her up as he staggered back with her.

"Confound it," he muttered, "here is a pretty kettle of fish! The Lord knows when I will get over to New York."

A loud he called for help.

"Can't some of you here help me bring this lady to?"

The scene occasioned the greatest excitement in the waiting-room.

Some excited individual called out:

"The lady's dropped dead!"

Teresa Evangeline heard the words.

She arose from her seat, feeling sure that she, too, was going to lose her senses.

A cold sweat stood out on Ruby Porker's brow.

"Great Jupiter!" he groaned, "one fainting woman is enough, without two. Young woman, don't you try to faint!"

Teresa Evangeline heard him just in the nick of time.

She paused.

yourself a little and get on your feet? I ain't cast-iron."

Mrs. McGuinness managed to regain her feet, and Mr. Skitts led her to a seat.

He deposited her there and fanned her a couple of times with his hat.

"Now you are as right as ever you were," he said, "and I'll be off."

Again was he disappointed in leaving.

Mrs. McGuinness was surrounded by sympathizers, and she rather enjoyed being the center of interest, a quasi heroine, as it were, for the news had circulated around amongst those present that she had had a narrow escape from becoming a widow.

Expressions of condolence were heard in abundance, and the air was filled with "poor souls" and "poor dears."

"Mr. Porker," she murmured, in a feeble tone, "I cannot spare you just yet."

At this intimation Ruby Porker felt like digging his nails in his flesh.

His every fiber was itching to make as much speed as possible to recover possession of McGuinness, for he was fearful of Mr. Skitts, as well he might be.

He hissed something that did not sound much like sacred wre.

"Hang it—just my luck!" he mentally said. "Every moment is precious, and here I am at the caprice of a female crank who has got a constitution like an ox."

He hesitated whether to leave or stay.

He tried to force a smile, a most ghastly effort.

"I guess it is a good deal imagination, madam," he remarked. "You will be yourself quite again in a short time."

He tried to look the picture of solicitude as he bent over Mrs. McGuinness, while if he could he would have choked her.

"Most certainly I will," he said, adding to himself, "What in thunder the idiot wants me to do for her I don't know. Hang women!"

Mrs. McGuinness soon let him know what she wanted him to do for her.

"I fale wake and exhausted," said she; "is there not a hotel near by?"

"Taylor's."

"Conduct me there and procure me a little refreshment."

This mandate made him feel like gnashing his teeth.

He ventured to remonstrate.

"Aren't you awfully anxious about your husband, Mrs. McGuinness?" he put out, as a sealer.

She did not appear to be.

Or, if she was anxious secretly, her reply did not evince the fact.

"Faix, I guess as long as Mike is out av the wather he can take care av himself on dry land," she said. There was no alternative.

The lawyer had to grin and bear it.

Feeling as if it would do him good to be the receiver of a sound drubbing, he headed the procession to Taylor's hotel.

There he hired a private parlor, into which Mrs. McGuinness ordered refreshments served.

When they came up Ruby Porker, as he beheld the family sail into the provender, thought that now or never he must make a last desperate effort to flee.

"Now you are comfortable," he stated, "I will bid you adieu."

No use.

He was not going to get away in a hurry, for Mrs. McGuinness insisted on his sitting down and partaking of some of the viands.

Vainly he protested that he was not hungry.

"Ah, fi!" rebuked she. "Never refuse a lady; it ain't ettyket."

Looking as cheerful as Banquo's ghost, he sank into a chair.

Fate was against him indubitably, and he suffered himself to be helped without further remonstrance to a piece of apple-pie and a glass of cider.

Out of courtesy he had to eat some of the pie.

It was hotel pie, and it nearly choked him.

The cider was sour, and made him qualmish.

Such a wretched forty-five minutes he had never before experienced at a meal.

But at the lapse of that time his hostess graciously permitted him to exit.

"Bring Mike back all safe and sound," she said in farewell, "and tell him to buy me a basket av flower-ets. I want to go with eclatter to Philadelphia, seeing I never war there before."

"Eclat, mar," corrected Teresa Evangeline.

"Ye moind yez own business!" sharply reproved her mother. "I guess I know how to talk French as well as yeailf. Good-night, Mr. Porker!"

"Good-night!"

Their departed guest was so mad when he reached the street that he almost felt tempted to chuck himself down a culvert.

"The odds are that Skitts has got hold of McGuinness, and, if so, no one knows what lies the infernal scoundrel will tell about me," he ferociously said.

He was right.

Ferry-boats, going in opposite directions, contained on one himself, and on the other Mr. Skitts and McGuinness.

Mr. Skitts went to the waiting-room of the depot.

He found out what had transpired.

Off he started for the hotel.

His mind was at ease.

"You bet that Porker has dumped them there and then flew away like a bird. Come along," he commanded.

He was at the hotel in a jiffy, and finding out where the objects of his search were, went to the private parlor at once.

Needless to say that the McGuinnesses were surprised at the advent of the new-comers—at Mr. Skitts especially.

"Mike, darlint," shrieked Mrs. McGuinness, as she rushed toward him, "come to me arums!"

McGuinness waved her away.

"It is too damp am I as yet to hug," he said. "Wait till I dry off. Don't ye behould our friend Mr. Skitts? Why don't ye speake to him?"

Mrs. McGuinness' eyes flashed fire.

"Spake to that villain!" she shouted, "after his making the laughing-stock av the city av us wid the Russian tandem, as ye call it? If I wur not a leddy born and bred I wud scratch the eyes out av his ugly head."

She spoke so vindictively that Mr. Skitts considered it wise to intercept a chair between himself and her.

"That will do, Ellen," said McGuinness; "Mr. Skitts is our best friend."

"What Mr. Porker says—"

"Porker is an assassin. Listen."

Then he related what had been told him relative to Ruby Porker by Mr. Skitts.

Mrs. McGuinness swallowed the fiction.

She paled as she thought of her imaginary escape from death.

"And yet Mr. Porker don't luk like that sort av a man," she said.

"What the judge said precisely when he gave him six months for knocking down a little boy who was going on an errand and taking the pennies out of his hand," observed Mr. Skitts. "But this ain't going to Philadelphia. We have just time now to get the next express-train."

They hurried up, and a few hours found them in the Quaker city at the Continental Hotel, best rooms in the house, for there were no flies ou our travelers.

That night they retired early, and in the morning were ready for amusement.

"How would you like a horseback ride before breakfast?" asked Mr. Skitts, simply in joke. "It's all the style. English, you know."

To his surprise, they took the jest in earnest.

"It is a soine morning," McGuinness avowed, "and I don't moind if we do take a saddle-jaunt. Shure, when I drove an ash-cart I always rode the horse home, and I wur considered quite an equestrian."

Mr. Skitts hid his surprise admirably.

"Can the ladies ride?" interrogated he.

Certainly they could, for did you ever see a woman yet who did not think she could do anything?

He took them to a livery-stable where he was acquainted (it seemed as if he was acquainted everywhere) and procured saddle-horses.

With his usual leaning toward a practical joke, he dictated what horses each should ride.

He mounted McGuinness, who was a regular sawed-off, on the back of an animal about ten feet high, while he placed Mrs. McGuinness and her avoirdupois upon a beast not much larger than a polo-pony.

To Teresa Evangeline he gallantly gave a pretty fair palfrey.

On the poor twips he had no mercy.

He stuck them up in the air on a couple of equine scarecrows.

"Let go their heads!" he ordered of the boys who held the horses' heads. "Get up!"

The boys obeyed, and the horses, freed, started off at a lively gait.

Oh, it was a sight to see the bold McGuinnesses going clattering down the street, the pictures of agony.

"Begorrah!" wailed McGuinness, as he bounced up and down in his saddle, "this may be thraveling for playture, but I have me doubts."

PART VII.

TRULY it was a grand sight to behold the McGuinnesses on horseback, for the way they rode denoted very little previous familiarity with that noble animal the horse. When McGuinness' nag started off at a rapid rate all of the rest of the equines followed his example.

Bumpety-bump!
Bumpety-bump!
Bumpety-bump!

McGuinness arose and fell in the air, and it seemed to him that the saddle must surely have been stuffed with cobble-stones by the way it pained him every time that he came down.

"Faix, a little of this goes a long ways," he groaned; "rolding no doubt is very exhilarating, but asther this when I ride I will take a coach and not try to commit suicide on top av a giraffe wid a spine formed av bed-rock."

His faintly were enjoying themselves likewise.

Especially the poor twins, to whom it seemed that they were about on a line with the second-story windows of the houses of the street through which they were passing.

Eliza was the first to drop her reins and cling in affright to her horse's neck—an example soon followed by her sister, the fair Marguerite.

There was no actual danger to them, however, for the animals which they were riding could hardly go fast enough to have thrown them off if they had rode them bareback.

Nevertheless, they were scared nearly to death. They thought that every second would be their last, and shut their eyes as they clung desperately on.

Mrs. McGuinness could not complain of any danger of being run away with.

The little mare which bore her was not equal to the task.

Her progress was confined to a jog and a limp. The result was that Mrs. McGuinness was soon left behind.

"Why don't you come along, mar?" Teresa Evangeline demanded, as she passed her mother.

Teresa Evangeline was satisfied.

She ought to have been.

She had the only decent mount of the whole lot, for Mr. Skitts had provided her with a regular lady's palfrey.

It might be that the astute lawyer might have contemplated Miss McGuinness as a possible matrimonial alliance.

Mrs. McGuinness scowled.

She lashed her mare savagely, an act the only result of which was to make the dwarf-wonder go slower than ever and put on a fancy touch to her limp.

"How can I come along, ye giddy fly-away," she irately asked, "when I might just as well be rolding av a goat?"

Incensed at her slow journeying, she whaled the beast afresh.

The mare, like all little equines, was spunky.

She considered that the chastisement she was receiving—for she was trying honestly to get along as fast as possible—uncalled for, and she smarted under the injustice.

Suddenly she pricked her ears up.

She stood stock still.

With a frantic snort she began kicking her hind feet in the air, with the intention of getting rid of her lovely burden.

Mrs. McGuinness, taken by surprise by the move on the part of the animal, was as yet not ready to be dung off.

For if ever a woman possessed determination it was herself.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

Her whip descended on the mare's flanks with a vengeance.

The mare retorted.

She kicked higher and more fiercely than before. By this time Mrs. McGuinness was far in the rear, isolated from the others.

It was but natural that the struggle between her and the mare should attract the attention of the passing pedestrians and vehicles.

Grinning, they halted and made various facetious remarks:

"Hit him again, old gal!"

"Use your spurs."

"Stab her wid dat dizzy scent-bottle."

"Give her a smell of the bouquet."

"Whoa, Emma!"

"Stick a pin in her."

"Send for Bergh. It is cruelty to animals!"

"Of course it is. She ought to walk and carry the mare!"

Needless to mention, these remarks, which were hurled at her purely out of sympathy for her predicament, of course, did not serve to make her any calmer.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

Again was the exhibition repeated.

To the glowing delight of the crowd.

They encouraged her to persevere some more.

"Try it again!"

"Coax her!"

"Feed her on a gumdrop!"

"Whisper 'sugar' in her ear!"

"Pull her tail!"

These choice sarcasms made Mrs. McGuinness furious.

Her anger was transferred from the mare to her tormentors.

She shook her fist at them while the mare tried to play on an imaginary piano with her heels.

"Ye call yesiles gentlemen, I suppose?" she fairly hissed, "but ye ain't. It is a collecthion av dirthy blackguards are the whole av yez."

Wonderful to relate, the gang around her did not seem to be a bit resentful at her vituperation.

Instead they cheerily acquiesced in it.

"You're right, madam."

"We ain't gentlemen."

"Blackguards all of us."

"You ought to have us copped."

"Or send for the military."

So they howled.

Mrs. McGuinness was worked up to fever heat.

"Oh, ye low-mannered loafers!" she ejaculated, "If I wur upon the ground wudn't I make yez regret yez slurs. It is lash ye wid me whip wud I so sincerely that ye wud carry the marks to yez graves!"

Unlucky lady.

The spunky little mare made a last desperate effort for freedom.

Owing to the fact that she was so disconcerted at being the object of ironical interest that she neglected her grip on the bridle.

The result was disastrous.

The spunky little mare's effort was successful.

She threw Mrs. McGuinness plump over her head.

She did not, however, reach the ground at first.

A rag-cart, driven by an Italian, had chanced to pause right in front of her to enjoy the circus.

It did not prove so much of a circus to him as he anticipated.

For Mrs. McGuinness descended plump into the rag-cart which the owner had tilted down and stood to one side, the more fully to take in the fun.

The weight caused the rag-cart to fly vigorously up in the air.

Some mischievous joker took in the situation.

He grabbed the handle of the vehicle for rags.

"Poor lady," he said, with mock seriousness,

"she's fainted! Let's wheel her to the drug-store."

The idea was hailed as a brilliant one by those around.

In a minute half a dozen burly tramps had hold of the handle and were pushing Mrs. McGuinness, kicking and screaming, up the street.

Her ride, luckily for her comfort, was of short duration, for a policeman appeared; for policemen do appear on rare occasions in Philadelphia.

At the sight of him the tramps let go of the rag-cart and fled.

The policeman gazed sternly at Mrs. McGuinness.

"It is a shame," he uttered, "that a lady of your position should so far forget herself as to get drunk in a rag-cart."

Mrs. McGuinness was out of her novel conveyance in

It required two glances on Mrs. McGuinness' part to see that the nondescript was her husband. "For Heaven's sake, Mike," she asked, "where have ye been? How in the wurruld did ye ever get whoitewashed?"

"It ain't whoitewashed, Ellen," he corrected, he being spattered completely with some sort of a white mixture. "it is loime!"

"Loime?"

"Yis."

"Where did ye encounter it?"

"I wur pitched into a lake av it."

"How?"

"Aisy. Me horse, may the curse av Cromwell loight on him, ran away and pitched me over an embankment in which a lot av laboreis wur mixing av the fluid."

"What he says, mum, is true, and he might have

"But do, par," persisted Teresa Evangeline, "go somewhere and get yourself brushed off."

Mr. Skitts also interposed.

"I will hire a cab," he said, "and you and Mrs. McGuinness can drive right to the hotel. Miss McGuinness and myself and the twins will follow."

Well, McGuinness was himself again when the others reached the hotel, and was reposing on a luxurious sofa enjoying an imported cigar with a truss around it.

"What shall be the programme for the day?" queried Mr. Skitts.

"Suppose ye map it out yesilf?" responded McGuinness.

"All right. First we will take a drive through the Park."

"Yes."

"Then go to the matinee."

McGuinness paid for everybody, for he had brought the whole gang along, even to the stony-faced Richard, who gazed at the show with an air of corpse-like indifference.

McGuinness was impressed as he beheld the swiftly fleeting skaters, who were clad in all manner of masquerades.

"Shure this is foine," said he, as he was ushered into a private box. "Wud ye look at that man, Ellen, dressed up as a butcher's boy who is thryng to endeavor to break his neck throwing a handspring. Be heavens, but he has succeeded—good!" and he clapped his hands in his approval of thefeat.

"Do you skate, Miss McGuinness?" asked Mr. Skitts of the oldest daughter.

"Yes," she confessed.

"Will you favor me?"

"I don't mind. Par!"



It required two glances on Mrs. McGuinness' part to see that the nondescript was her husband. "For Heaven's sake, Mike," she asked, "where have ye been? How in the wurruld did ye ever get whoitewashed?"

"drowned had it not been for me," volunteered the second Philadelphia policeman, "and if it had not been for me he would have been a dead man, for the pool of lime into which he was slung was almost three feet deep."

"Indade, the cop spakes the thruth," asseverated McGuinness.

"Luckily I had sinse enough to shut me eyes, or I might have been blinded."

Glancing at Teresa Evangeline, he perceived that interesting young lady almost whimpering.

"And what may all ye, Vangie?" he propounded.

"I am so ashamed."

"About what?"

"You and mar."

"About what?"

"All of the gentlemen and ladies of the city are laughing at us."

McGuinness tried to look majestic. He glowered upon his daughter.

"Things have come to an airly pass when a spring chicken like yezself is ashamed av her father and her mother. Why are you ashamed av yez father and yez mother?"

"because I find one of you in a rag-cart and the other coated over with lime. It will get into the papers and then we never will be able to move in Philadelphia society."

"Hoity-toity, but it is a pity about yesilf!" indignantly declared McGuinness. "Ye are too hoigh-strung for yez age. As for mesilf, I don't care if I never move in Philadelphia society at all, at all."

"Take us to see a play wid lots av blood and a bally."

"I'll try. Then after supper we will go to the big skating rink; there is a big fancy dress ball and carnival there to-night."

Teresa Evangeline clapped her hands at this programme.

Especially was she pleased with the skating-rink part of it.

"It will seem just like home," she gleefully uttered. "Don't you remember, mar, the last carnival I went to in New York, what fun I did have?"

"I think it wur me who had the fun," remarked Mrs. McGuinness. "Didn't Celia Rafferty give ye away, and whin yez father found out that ye had gone, he raced me all over the house wid a club?"

"It wur roight I wur to be indignant," continued Mr. McGuinness; "skating-rinks are no places for young girls. Many a young girl, and, for that matter, some oild hens, have met their ruin in them. But as long, though, as I go wid ye I don't moind scooping in the astray."

The programme was carried out.

Philadelphia was partially done during the day.

At night they went to the skating-rink.

The exterior of the building was, as a rural reporter would say, "a scene of glittering splendor." Lights shone from hundreds of windows, the man with the calcium was out in full force; a brass band earned their money on a balcony outside, while fireworks were being set off from the roof.

The interior was equally bewildering with lights and bunting and gay decorations.

"What is it?" queried McGuinness.

"Mr. Skitts wants me to rink with him. Can't I?" McGuinness hesitated at first.

Finally, however, he gave his consent.

He spoke dubiously to his wife as he watched the retreating figures of the prospective skaters.

"I don't loike it any too much, Ellen," said he.

"Ye don't loike what?"

"The way Skitts is behaving."

"What is he doing?"

"Shying around Teresa."

"I haven't noticed it."

"I have. Didn't he give her an elegant horse while he gave me a camel, and the rist av yez howly horrors? And now he is taking her on the wheels thryng to captivate her fresh affections. If I thought he wur asther her fur a genuine mash I wud foire him."

McGuinness only laughed.

"Ye are as suspicions as any oild granny," she said. "Don't go fur to be putting such nothions into the choidl's head."

"Choidl, is she?" solemnly repeated McGuinness.

"The choidl, ould lady, can give ye points in some things. Don't she use red paint on her cheeks, and only this morning I collared her darkening her eyebrows wid burnt cork?"

"All young girls are foolish," extenuated Mrs. McGuinness. "I used to be that way mesilf."

"And if ye think that ye have got over it ye are deluded. Lirk at yez complexion."

"What ails it?"

"Yez face looks like a wax-doll, whiole the back av yez neck is the hue of a cheap picked turkey. When

ye put on yez bloom of youth wid the whoite-wash
brush why don't ye make a clane job av it?"

Mrs. McGuinness bridled up.

She felt insulted.

She arose.

"Come, children," she said to the twins, "let us go down and see them skate. Yez father at toimes has the sense av a powdher-monkey."

"Don't ye want me to come?" quipped McGuinness.

"No, moind yez own business."

She departed.

McGuinness chuckled.

He was left alone in the box with the hilarious Richard, who was in one of his customary trances.

"Ellen is very sensitive," he said to his valet; "she flares up at the least worrud. Suppose we follow her example and join the spectators at the scene av revelry? I want, betwixt ye and I, to kape an eye on Skitts."

They descended to the skating floor.

The first thing he saw was a sign:

"COSTUMES TO HIRE."

"What does that mane?" he asked.

"It means," informed Richard, "just what it says. Any one who wants a costume can hire one."

"Anybody?"

"Yes."

"Anybody at all?"

"Yes."

"Me?"

"If you have the price."

"Richard?"

"Well?"

"I have an idea."

"Yes, sir."

"I will boire some sort av a suit and watch Skitts and me daughter in disguise."

"Yea, sir. I will show you where you can get what you want."

Richard kept his word.

He led the way to the little office where costumes were being chartered.

"Got ze vera thing for you," said the costumer—a lively little Frenchman. "It is ze suit of ze clown. It is loose, and you can slip it right over your other clothes. A little paint and ze powdair and no one vill ever know you."

The costume was a regular clown's one—baggy all over, and was of some white material with huge red spots.

It was just McGuinness' size, and he had no difficulty in getting it over his other suit.

Then the agile costumer deftly put on the paint and powder and jammed a felt hat on McGuinness' head.

"Look at yourself!" the costumer cried, delighted.

"Magnique! Look in ze glass."

McGuinness did.

"Bedad," he confessed, "I wud not know mesilf. I luk loike a Boogie Man."

"It is complete," testified the Frenchman. "Mon Dieu! vat a sensation you would create on top of ze horse who can roller-skate."

PART VIII.

THE costumer's words caused McGuinness to start. He looked incredulous.

"What are ye giving me?" he asked, "a horse on roller skates? Nixt ye will be avowing the existhence av a live elephant on stilts."

But the Frenchman was in dead earnest.

"It was true, sare," he replied. "Zey fasten ze skates on ze beast's hoofs, and he has been trained so zat he fly around right vide-avake. Wizout much grace, certainly, but vat you can expect, sare, of ze animal dumb?"

"That's the thune," owned McGuinness. "Can I be-hould the wondher av the age?"

"Wiz happiness," answered the other, who appeared to be greatly interested in the equine marvel. "Come, and I vill introduce you to ze charman filly. She has a lovely box-stall. Follow me."

McGuinness did.

The costumer led the way to the box-stall.

There, sure enough, was a saucy-looking jade, decked off with ribbons and flowers, to whose hoofs were attached roller-skates. Of course they were not the articles worn by two-legged proficients, but they just suited her.

As they entered, a gentleman with a black mustache of exceeding fierceness and a diamond of exceeding size and off-color was stroking her mane.

"Well, what do you want, Frogsy?" he said, familiarly. "And who are these ducks you've got with you?"

Gentlemen who was come to enjoy ze great carnival. Zees run" (indicating McGuinness, for Richard had taken care to post the costumer as to who his employer was) "ees a rich New York millionaire, traveling for pleasure. Monsieur McGuinness, zis ees ze proprietaire of ze rink, Mr. Jackson."

Mr. Jackson was a shrewd judge of character.

"His short nibbs is on a racket on the Q. T." he so-iloquized. "That sort of animated lamp-post is his servant. It debooves me to try and make a mash. It may be money in."

A loud he cordially said:

"Welcome to Philadelphia, Mr. McGuinness! You can't expect, of course, to find it as lively as New York, but occasionally I make an humble effort at crimsouing the little settlement. Witness this carnival."

"I have seen some av it," said McGuinness, "and it is sole."

"You bet. Don't you mean to participate in the revelry?"

"Participate?"

"Yes."

"Is it jine in ye mane?"

"Assuredly. You don't want to miss the fun?"

"Faix, it ain't much fun fur me."

"Why not?"

"Only to the eye, bekase I can't skate."

"You never will if you don't try to."

McGuinness shook his head.

"I have no craving in that direction," he remarked. "Shure, there wud be a temporary suspension av the carnival to enjoy the soight av me making a monkey show out av mesilf."

"Not as bad as that," laughed the proprietor of the rink.

As he spoke he was seized with an idea.

For Mr. Jackson was a man of ideas.

He was fertile in them.

One of them came to him as he looked at McGuinness.

He was great for something new and original in his line of busness, something that would create a sensation.

Now he thought he had struck it.

What could be more sensational than the debut of McGuinness into the rink, mounted astride of the educated female quadruped?

He realized that such an apparition would be the talk of the town on the morrow, for he had taken good care to have any number of reporters present; and, if he could only induce McGuinness to mount the filly, the knights of the pencil would be only too glad to write him up, and what a free advertisement it would be.

He slapped McGuinness on the shoulder.

"You're from New York?" he heartily said.

"That is me address."

"You look like a thoroughbred."

"Blood will tell."

"And game?"

"In what manner?"

"For sport."

"Av coarse. New Yorkers, as a rule, are all game. But where does the sport come in? I wud loike to have a little to git square on me accident av this morning."

"Did you meet with one?"

"Rayther."

"Nothing serious, I hope?"

"Only a trolle. I wint roidng upon a baste av a horse—well they called it a horse—but in me opinion he wur an army mule wid his ears thrimmed down."

"What did he do to you?"

"Only chucked me into a lava-bed of loime, from which I kem out lukking loike the proize candidate at a ghost show."

"Don't mind a little thing like that. Say?"

"Emit it."

"Will you do me a favor?"

"Wid pleasure."

Catching McGuinness by the arm, he conducted McGuinness and Richard to his private office.

"Sit down," he invited, setting the example by sinking down into an easy-chair.

McGuinness followed suit, while Richard deposited himself on a stiff stool, with the air of a corpse being there on sufferance.

"Have something?" Mr. Jackson queried. "Plenty of stuff in the locker."

McGuinness declined.

To his credit, he was not a drinking man, but when it came to sociability, he could take a friendly glass as well as the next.

"Take a smoke, then?" requested Mr. Jackson.

McGuinness never refused a weed.

He took one and lit it.

"Begob, but that is something loike nicotine," he said. "Do ye smoke these steady?"

"They're my regular, diel."

"Kaping a rink must pay."

"Oh, I don't starve. But I ain't told you yet what I want you to do for me."

"No. What is it?"

"It will be the biggest lark out."

"What?"

"Seeing you on top of my wonderful little filly. You will look too comical for anything!"

McGuinness demurred.

"Much obliged am I to ye," he remarked, "but I wud prefer to let the lark fly."

Mr. Jackson would not hear of it.

One of his chief traits was persistency, and he kept on at McGuinness, almost going down on his knees and imploring him to ride the animal.

McGuinness meant to be firm.

He had an toward perception that if he complied with Mr. Jackson's request he would only succeed in making a fool of himself.

Constant dropping, though, wears away the hardest rock.

McGuinness was good-natured enough to be talked into anything.

Besides, he was in disguise, nobody would ever know him.

Then, too, it gave him a position where he could keep an eye on the designing Mr. Skitts and the ingenuous Teresa Evangeline.

So by and by he weakened.

"Anything to plaze," he said, with a half-comic groan, "but it is the impulse av me heart against me brain, and I am willing to wager that I will make a howly show av mesilf. What do you think, Richard?"

The solemn Richard put in a cap in favor of the scheme.

"The Count de Montmorency de Saville," he said gravely, "was very fond of masquerading. During carnival times at Naples he used to disguise him-

self as an Indian and gallop through the streets on a pig."

That settled it.

"If he wint masquerading, I don't see why I can't," expressed McGuinness. "His example is a patrician wan."

"Certainly, sir. Have a try, anyway."

"But suppose the ould woman gets onto me? She'll pull me down to the flure and scalp me."

"I don't think she will know you."

"I'm bound she won't," promised Mr. Jackson; "a detective could not spot you."

"Honest?"

"Honest."

"Thin bring on me leddy horse till I risk me life. But hould on a minute."

"What for?"

"I want to ask ye a few questions."

"Ask away."

"Does she kick?"

"No."

"Bolt?"

"No."

"Run away?"

"No."

"Have the bloind sthaggers?"

"Nonsense. She is as gentle as a lamb. Come here, Jenny."

Jenny, who was docile enough, being made a regular pet of, obeyed.

She whinnied up to her master, who stroked her bang.

"See," he said, "you're a daisy, ain't you, my little girl. Now, McGuinness, get aboard. You will make the hit of the evening."

"Barrin' some wan don't take me for a lunatic and and hit me off av me horse wid a club."

"No danger," gleefully said Mr. Jackson. "Here, Frogsy, where are you?"

"Here," said the dapper costumer, who had been taking a sly nip behind the door, "Vat ees it?"

"I want you to give our new star a lift."

"Yes, sare."

Assisted by Mr. Jackson, the individual dubbed Frogsy soon had McGuinness mounted upon Jenny, who did not object.

"It will break their hearts—it will drive 'em crazy!" enthusiastically ejaculated Mr. Jackson, as he surveyed McGuinness and Jenny. "I'm ever so much obliged to you, Frogsy!"

"Yes, sare."

"Make way for me!" shouted he, "I can't be bate." Crack! Crack! Crack!

He struck at some of the maskers. They took it in good part.

"Hit us again!" entreated one.

"Once more, please I" a second begged.

"Here's a head, hit it!" urged a third.

"More bladder sauce!" requested a fourth.

There was one young fellow on mischief bent, who made up his mind to torment McGuinness. He was an expert upon wheels, and garbed like a harlequin.

He glided up to McGuinness and gave him a crack with his wand.

McGuinness felt insulted.

Like a great many others, he did not believe that turnabout is fair play.

"What do ye mane, ye dizzy fakir?" he demanded. The harlequin only laughed sarcastically.

He gave McGuinness a second swish with his wand.

"Ah, you gorilla," he invited, "come off."

This only made McGuinness feel more wroth.

"Come off av what?" he angrily asked.

"That wooden horse."

"Ye are a lolari! It's rale."

"Get out! It's a snap. It goes by clockwork."

"What are ye throwing at me?"

"Facta. Come off, or I know how I will settle your hash."

"How?"

"I'll grab you by the leg."

"Ye don't dare!"

"Don't I? Cully, I was born in a dark alley, and I dare anything. Come off of that wooden horse, or I'll catch you by the leg and land you with a crash to the floor. Then I will send an usher after an ambulance. You need one."

This was more provoking than ever.

McGuinness wheeled after the mocker.

"Be heavens!" he yelled, "I will knock out yez brains, if ye own any, wid me bladder."

Another satirical laugh.

Another light blow, for the young fellow was only having a little fun with the old man.

"Do it," he pleaded. "My wife will thank you. My life is insured for her benefit, and I think she no longer loves me. Slaughter me if you can."

McGuinness was just chump enough to accept the challenge.

He steered Jenny after the harlequin, which was a very sensible thing to do; something like the attempt of an elephant to catch a flea.

The crowd roared with pleasure.

McGuinness was affording them lots of unexpected sport.

They encouraged him to try and annihilate the mischief-maker.

They hooted and howled:

"Kill him!"

"Butcher him!"

"Spare him not!"

"Run him down!"

"Now you've got him!"

"Try again. Better luck next time."

The harlequin skated with provoking coolness along, just keeping out of the reach of McGuinness' bladder.

Several times did McGuinness strike at the harlequin's head, but somehow, every time a blow descended, the harlequin's head was somewhere else.

This made McGuinness fume.

He bit his lip, and made up his mind to hit that head if he could.

Fortune favors the determined, and so it was in this case.

It is not always best to be too confident, and so the harlequin found it out.

He made a wheel, which he thought would bring him out of range.

He miscalculated.

It did nothing of the sort. Instead, it brought him in a position where McGuinness had full play at him.

Like lightning did McGuinness grasp the opportunity.

Rising up in his stirrups, he wielded the bladder with both hands.

The blow was a sturdy one, and scored on his tormentor's cranium resonantly.

Entirely taken by surprise, the smitten one stumbled, and fell sprawling to the waxed floor.

The laugh was on the other side of the house, and the audience appreciated it.

They shouted until the roof nearly fell in.

The harlequin lay still for a minute.

He had a keen sense of the humorous, and it struck him that he was served just right.

When he sat up it was with a laugh.

"Good for you, beauty," he said, "you did count."

McGuinness heaved a sigh of relief.

"Are ye there?" he anxiously asked.

"Yes," answered the young gentleman upon the floor, "I forgive you."

"Are ye alive?"

"Rather."

"Begob, ye have taken a load off av me heart."

"How?"

"I thought I had kill ye."

"Not as bad as that, I guess," answered the harlequin, as he skated away, taking the jeers of the lookers-on good-humoredly.

Mr. Jackson was beside himself with glee.

"He's the biggest card I ever had," he uttered. "I wonder couldn't I hire him every night? Say, Froggy?"

Frogsy was at his heels as usual.

"Yes, sare," he replied.

"Get the house horseshoe."

"Yes, sare."

(The house horseshoe was a floral piece which was owned by Mr. Jackson, and presented in turn to all of the various skating stars in turn during the evening.)

"Take it around and present it to McGuinness."

Frogsy obeyed.

Staggering under the horseshoe, he crossed the rink to where McGuinness was.

"Monsieur McGuinness," said the costumer, "allow me to present you wiz zese flowers from your admirers legion."

McGuinness was overwhelmed.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, in some confusion, "this is the proudest moment av me loife."

Roars of applause greeted this speech, and McGuinness rode gracefully around the rink, the horseshoe around his neck.

"This is something loike loife," he complacently soliloquized. "It is a lion am I, and—"

He paused in his soliloquy.

He checked Jenny so suddenly that he was nearly flung over her head.

The reason was simple.

Skating toward him was a couple.

They wore Japanese dominoes and carried Japanese parasols.

But he recognized them at once.

They were the artful Mr. Skitts and Teresa Evangeline.

"Begorra," he hissed, "how can I hould meself together? How do I know but that they may have made up their moinds to elope in that disguise? I'll stop it, though."

He did not, however.

A moment's reflection convinced him that if he upbraided the offenders, very naturally they would want to know what he was doing in his present masquerade.

"Wud to Heaven," he groaned, "that I wur off av this rowler-skating crab!"

PART IX.

IT cost McGuinness a great effort to refrain from swooping down on Mr. Skitts and Teresa Evangeline, and breaking up their idyl on skates.

Naturally, though, they would want to know how he himself had got into his present predicament, and ask uncomfortable questions.

"I wud give wan hundred dollars," he muttered, as he bit his lip, "if I could knock the sly intriguer's head off av his shouldhers. Luk at him now, chirping a valentoine into her ear. Just wait till I get me forthune—it is pay him what I have borrowed av him, thank him kindly for the favor he did me, and kick the ghoul out."

Regretful that it would not be his policy to demolish the lawyer, he rode on.

For ten or fifteen minutes he was the center of attraction.

Then the public, always fickle, rushed off to see an exhibition of fancy skating by a couple of professionals. He felt himself temporarily eclipsed.

Inasmuch as the fair sex went to see the others and did not fling him any more bouquets.

He tried to console himself with the reflection that they would be back.

"They can't afford to miss me," he soliloquized, "and they better laud me whoile they have me in their vista, bekae whin I have I don't intind to ask for a rayturn souvenir to enable me to get in again."

Slowly he rode along.

Apart from the rink proper was what might be called a refreshment-room, fitted up with tables and chairs—a great resort for spooney couples.

It was on a level with the floor of the rink, and so, more out of curiosity than anything else, he intruded the head of his filly into the room, just to have a look around at what was going on.

The tables were mostly all occupied.

Ladies and gentlemen were sitting eating light viands and sipping their drinks.

McGuinness did not expect to see anybody he knew. But he was disappointed.

Cruelly so.

At one table he beheld the twins sipping lemonade, eating cake, and carrying on a desperate flirtation with a couple of amateur dudes.

The next table was occupied by Mr. Skitts and Teresa Evangeline, and the former was plainly putting in his conversational fine work.

At a third table was Mrs. McGuinness and a gentleman robed like a Spanish cavalier with a dazzling crimson cloak and a flaring brigand hat.

The features of the cavalier seemed strangely familiar, and even garbed as he was he had no difficulty in recognizing the features of Ruby Porker.

Yes, it was that distinguished legal luminary. After letting the McGuinnesses slip through his fingers he was mad enough to dynamite himself.

However, spilt milk cannot be picked up, and he soon ascertained around the ferry that their destination was Philadelphia.

Swallowing his anger as well as he could he lost no time in following them.

Once in the City of Brotherly Love and marble-stoops he had no trouble in locating them. He got onto their track at once.

"I'll have them again, never fear," he tried to console himself, "it is a very cold day when I can't get the best of a chump like my esteemed friend Skeleton Skitts."

Accordingly, when he found out that they had gone to the carnival he followed. Thus was his presence accounted for upon the gay and festive scene.

Luck was with him.

Securing his costume, he spotted Mrs. McGuinness and the twins at once.

Just as if nothing had occurred he walked up to Mrs. McGuinness.

Lifting his copious hat, he saluted her with a honeyed smile and the salutation:

"Good-evening."

The lady started.

No wonder.

She would have as soon expected to behold her grandmother's ghost.

She was almost paralyzed with indignation.

Such nerve!

Such gal!

Such audacity!

She had a good mind to beckon to one of the officers on duty and have him arrested.

The idea!

He, who, according to Mr. Skitts' fairy-tale, had concocted a plot to abduct and murder them, to have the Polaric assurance to wish her "good-evening."

She glared at him with a stony glare, which would have excited uncomfortable emotions in the bosom of a stuffed owl.

Naturally Ruby Porker was astonished.

He had done his best for her at the depot—and what could she have against him?

He soon found out.

To his sorrow!

As Mrs. McGuinness continued to maintain her glare, his position was rather awkward.

He realized it.

Decidedly uncomfortable did he feel.

Yet he lifted his hat again.

Also smiled.

More honey in the second smile than in the first, but it was all lost on the object of his attention.

She looked as implacable as an iceberg.

"Good-evening!" he repeated.

Mrs. McGuinness turned in her chair.

The glance that she shot at him almost caused the crimson to pale in his cloak.

"Sir!" intoned she, in a voice like the distant rumble of thunder.

Her accoster felt his knees shake.

What could be up?

Uncertain as to what it might be for, the third time he observed:

"Good evening!"

Mrs. McGuinness arose.

In majestic grandeur.

She pointed to the door.

She extended the index finger of her right hand toward one of the exits.

"Lave!" she commanded, in trumpet tones.

Ruby Porker was dumbfounded.

"But," he stammered.

"Get!" again said Mrs. McGuinness.

"But—"

"No buts."

"Allow me to—"

"I will allow ye nothing. Ye may consider yesilf thankful, me forgiving fur not placing ye into custody."

"Custody?"

"Yea."

"Of who?"

"That policeman yondher."

"What fur?"

"Attempted murdher."

This sort of dazed Ruby Porker.

He repeated her words.

"Attempted murder?" quoth he.

"I said it."

"But to what do you refer, madam? Possibly I cannot form the slightest conjecture."

"Ye caunot?"

"No."

Mrs. McGuinness' indignation increased.

"Ye have a blacker heart than I thought," she commented, "but I am not at all surprised. A villain who wud plot the engulftment av a whole family beneath the waves that niver did ye any harum, is fully capable av lying."

Ruby Porker was more dazed than ever.

"Me plot the engulftment of a whole family into the river?" he almost gasped.

"Yea."

"Pardon me, but allow me to ask you a question."

"Ask it."

"What might be the name of the family who I meant to murder by engulftment?"

"I am sorry for ye, ye hypocrite."

"Why?"

"Ye don't know?"

"On my honor."

"Your honor?"

"Certainly. Will you please tell me who the victims were?"

"Me and my innocent offspring."

In the glossary of the prize-ring this was what might be called a "facer."

He was so taken by amazement that he sank into a chair and wiped his brow absently with his dicer.

"Madam," he inquired, "who in the world told you such a fiction?"

"The gentleman is present now."

"He is?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"There he goes out of the door."

"There are two or three gentlemen going out. Which one do you mean?"

"Their backs are toward me."

"He's a friend av yez, I belave," icily said Mrs. McGuinness.

"He is?"

"Yea."

"And what might be his name?"

"Mr. Skitts."

Ruby Porker's eyes bulged out in astonishment.
"Did that dried-up disgrace to the law have the nerve to tell you such a base, malignant libel?"

"He did."
Ruby Porker puffed out with real or well-assumed rage, as if he were some vindictive turkey-gobbler on the war-path.

He scowled most darkly.
The veins on his forehead he swelled out as big as possible.

He rolled up his sleeves.
Also did he jam his white-plumed hat savagely down over his eyes.

"Ah-h-h-h!" he hissed, gutturally; "thank Heaven I am armed! Mrs. McGuinness?"

"Well, sir?"
"Calm yourself."

"I am calm."
"Excellent! Keep so. Do not allow yourself to become affrighted at the scene of bloodshed which may ensue the next minute; I intend to plunge a stiletto into his back up to the hilt. Nothing but gore can wipe away the insult to my reputation. I will bring the caitiff in here and wring his neck for him!"

The speaker looked so imposing in his wrath that Mrs. McGuinness was impressed.

Really she liked him better than Mr. Skitts.
He was more of a gallant; more of a ladies' man. She spoke in gentler accents.

"Do ye mane to say that there is no truth in what he towid me?" she queried.

"You are speaking of Skitts."

"Yea."
Ruby Porker made a pose.
Theatrically he doffed his chapeau, placed it over his heart—if he owned such an article—and raising his right hand toward the ceiling exclaimed in tones akin to those of a boss tragedian:

"Madam, I swear it. Here."

"What is it?"

"Give me your hand."

"An' what for?"

"I will lead you out and confront him with you. I will spill his life-blood at your feet."

This sounded very heroic.
All women love heroes.

Mrs. McGuinness was no exception.
She hesitated.

"If I could only believe you," she began.

He interrupted her.

"Follow me and see me make a carcass out of him."

These were desperate words.

Bravely spoken.

As he uttered them he looked wicked enough to do anything.

Femininity loves a dash of the diabolical in a man.

Mrs. McGuinness did like the sex in general.

Ruby Porker arose in her estimation.

She actually unbent so far as to simper.

"Don't," she pleaded.

"Don't what, madam?" sternly queried the avenger.

"Kill Mr. Skitts."

"Why not?"

"For my sake."

"That is just what I am going to immolate him for—

—for your sake."

"Please don't."

"Why not?"

"Bekase I do not care to figure as a hayro'ne in any sensational scene in a public place."

Ruby Porker was quick to take advantage of her words.

"You are right, Mrs. McGuinness," he said, "excuse me for affording the slighest breath of gossip to smirch a fair lady's fame. I will spare the villain this time till we meet again, for your sake, Mrs. McGuinness."

Mrs. McGuinness felt flattered at such chivalry.

"Shure it is a thousand toimes am I obliged to ye," she said.

"Not at all," said the other, who had no more of an idea of encountering Mr. Skitts than he had of flying through the air.

Mrs. McGuinness' admiration of Ruby Porker increased.

"I wud not for anything have ye get into any trouble on me account," she said.

"Willingly will I do anything to oblige you," answered the modern knight-errant.

He relaxed his ferocious air.

He did not look so much like a premeditated carver up of enemies.

Indeed he suffered his brow to relax.

A bland smile came over his oleaginous face.

He ventured with a bland "Excuse me" to take a seat opposite her and began fanning himself with his head apparel.

She did not object.

He ordered refreshments, and hove a sigh.

"Mrs. McGuinness, I hope you may allow me to call you my friend?" he said.

She yielded.

"Ye-es," said she.

"And as a friend of yours I naturally sympathize with you. We all have our own troubles."

"All av us."

"None of us are exempt."

"Nayther we are."

"And Mr. McGuinness, excuse me if I tread on delicate ground, has his."

Mrs. McGuinness looked wise.

She nodded gravely.

"Long have I suspected as much," she agreed.

"He is too good-natured."

"That he is."

"Too much so for his own good."

"How?"

"He believes all to be as virtuous as himself."

"That he do."

"Be cannot fathom the depravity of human nature."

"Come to think, I belave ye are roight. He has always seemed to have a soft spot in his head iver since he wur nearly burnt up at a foire in the new croton aquiduct."

"Ha! so I conjectured. Little knows he the blackness of a soul like Skitts—a being shrouded in crime from the day he was born!"

"Is that thrue?"

"It is. Listen."

Leaning over, he proceeded to pour a most harrowing and blood-curdling tale of depravity on the part of his legal friend.

If all what he said was true (?) Mr. Skitts was a monster of darkness.

He could lie as fast as the secrers at a walking-match could ring up the laps when excitement is necessary.

Mrs. McGuinness believed him, though.

She took it all in for corn.

As he dilated upon the other's atrocities gradually their heads drew nearer.

Any one at a little distance away would have thought that they were indulging in a loving confab.

And thus it seemed to McGuinness as he beheld them as he peered in at the entrance of the refreshment-room.

He was horrified at what he beheld.

"Be Heavens!" he said in angry accents, "if it ain't that murderer av a Porker a-mashing av the ould woman. Wud ye luk at the twins, too, flirting wid a couple av hoiged collared cockatoos av juvenile dndes. Troth it is a soight to wring the heart av a husband and father. But I will soon put an end to the love-tafty."

Wrathfully he dismounted from his animal.

He gave her a cut and set her adrift.

Then with blood in his eye and his trusty bladder in his hand, he swooped down upon the culprits.

The twins incited his wrath first.

He did not waste much ceremony.

He bounded in front of the table.

He raised his bladder.

He let it descend.

Whack!

Whack!

Each of the dudes got a blow which made them start to their feet.

Whack!

Whack!

They received a second dose, which caused them to start for cover to avoid more punishment.

"He's mad, baw Jove!" faltered one.

"Ye bet I am," corroborated McGuinness. "It is mad-dog mad, too. See me froth at the mouth. Whirr-r-r! show me some wather, and I'll have fits!"

Again did he repeat his fondling of them with his unique weapon.

It was too much of a good thing.

They forgot their politeness.

Also their fair companions.

Basely they shook them and run, each getting a farewell crack as he fled which made his head ring.

The twins were almost paralyzed at the unexpected apparition of their father, albeit they did not recognize him at all.

"Help!" shrieked Eliza.

"Murder!" screamed Marguerite.

"Save us!" begged Eliza.

"He's a lunatic!" exclaimed her sister.

"I'll tache ye to make coquettes out av yesilf at such an unripe age!" the author of their being declared. "Take that, and that, and that!"

Swish!

Swish!

Swish!

The bladder played a lively tattoo upon the head and shoulders of the twins.

Squawking as if their throats were being cut, they followed the example of their ungallant cavaliers.

That is to say, they took to their heels.

McGuinness did not pursue.

He was on higher game intent.

His quarry was at the other table.

With a bound and a war-whoop which would have done credit to the wildest of Indians, he appeared in front of Ruby Porker and Mrs. McGuinness.

He acted at once.

Very promptly.

Jumping upon an empty chair which was at the table, he brought the bladder down on the table with a dull thud which set the glasses upon it ringing.

Mrs. McGuinness gave vent to a howl of dismay.

Ruby Porker turned pale, and dropped his cherised sombrero in his affright.

Whack!

McGuinness bruised the surface of the table with his bladder.

"Begorra!" he shouted, "I am here!"

It was evident that he was.

But to make it more plainly palpable he struck the gentleman in the garb of a Spanish cavalier a smart crack on the nose.

Ruby Porker's nose was a sensitive organ.

The blow caused the rich crimson to spurt from his bugle. He clasped his hand over the smitten organ and sprang to his feet.

"Heavens!" he ejaculated, "I am stabbed!"

"Yis," assured the bold McGuinness, as he howered blow after blow upon the luckless cavalier, "and it will be a fatal stab, loikewoisse!"

Mrs. McGuinness came to a little.

Surely there was a something in the aspect of the new arrival which seemed strangely familiar.

She peered at him with terrified eyes.

A couple of glances sufficed.

She knew him!

She forgot her alarm in her surprise.

She leaped up.

"Howly Moses!" she exclaimed, in tones of consternation, "if it ain't Moike!"

"It is," declaimed McGuinness, "here I am a witness av yez perfidy. Ain't ye ashamed av yesilf to set such an example to yez children, ye old hen ye!"

Ruby Porker gasped for breath.

"McGuinness!" he cried.

"Yis, it is McGuinness, ye arch-fiend," avowed McGuinness, as he made a slash at the brigand-hat, "die, villain, die!"

The one aimed at dodged the blow.

He was not on the die.

Not just yet if he knew himself.

"McGuinness!" repeated he, "and in this masquerade. Are you mad?"

PART X.

RUBY PORKER gazed at McGuinness in surprise.

"For Heaven's sake," he queried, "where did you come from?"

"Back from the watery grave in which you meant to engulf me," responded McGuinness.

The obese lawyer looked surprised.

"I meant to engulf you in a watery grave!" he queried.

"Yis."

"What are you giving me?"

"The thruth."

"Who told you?"

"Some day you will find out your error," he adieu'd.

"When I do," returned McGuinness, "I will come around and present ye wid a bottle av anti-fat."

Mr. Ruby Porker was too offended, or pretended to be, to make any answer to this reflection upon his avoirdupois.

He made his exit in a most stately style, meant to impress McGuinness.

He failed.

McGuinness refused to be impressed.

The more that he reflected upon the alleged duplicity of the pettifogger the more he felt inclined to punish him somehow or another.

"Everything points to the fact it wur a deliberate plan av assassination," he soliloquized; "few men wud have spared him without making some retaliation. But I hate the oidea av shedding blood. It makes me qualmish. Faix, it is a good dale av the woman I have in me. Whin we kept the shanty up on the rocks, I wur too tinder-hearted to even milk a goat, for it always seemed to me as if the casualty wud must hurt the poor baste, and the same way I always left the wringing av a hen's neck to the ould woman."

McGuinness concluded that for the present he had seen fun enough at the rink.

So he went back to the private office and exchanged his garb.

"It is a splendid time you have had?" queried the affable manager of the rink, as he greeted McGuinness on his return.

McGuinness bit his lip.

"Iegant!" he replied. "I never had so much fun since I had the maysles and the barber's itch combined."

"But what makes you leave so early?"

"Shure I feel a little as if I had enjoyed mesilf too much."

"Nonsense! You will miss most of the sport if you don't stay."

"And what moight that be?"

"There is a vacant lot adjacent to the rink."

"I'll take'yez wurrud for it, as I am not familiar wid the locality."

"And as a free advertisement for the rink, I have a balloon ascension every hour with fireworks. The car of the balloon just holds one. Don't you want to make an ascension?"

The idea seemed a novel one to McGuinness.

"I wud enjoy an aerial voyage," he answered, "but there is only wan objection."

"What's that?"

"Shure I don't want to land in Africa, New Jersey, or some other foreign country."

The proprietor laughed.

"Oh," said he, "I don't mean to let you loose in the balloon."

"What thin?"

"There is a big rope which holds it to the ground and only allows it to go so far up. No danger of your eloping with the snap."

The novelty of the idea caught McGuinness' fancy.

"I don't moind if I do take a thrip," he said.

"Do so. It will be a novel sensation."

"And if anything I do loike, it is novel sensathions av any sort," said McGuinness. "Just for fun wanst I rode a camel in a circus parade. Be Heavens, me liver wur jolted up against me heart, and I wur flung of in front av the dromedaries and walked over by those playful bastes! I think that I will tackle the balloon."

"Come along, then," said the manager.

He led the way to a vacant lot which was brilliantly lighted up.

There McGuinness beheld the balloon struggling a few feet above the ground trying to get free from the rope which held it to the windlass upon the ground.

The rink proprietor ordered the men at the handle of the windlass to pull the balloon down to the ground.

His mandate was obeyed.

The balloon was brought down to terra firma.

"Just hop aboard," invited the manager—"but wait!"

"What for?"

"The fireworks."

"Foireworks?"

"Yes."

"What are they for?"

"To let off while ye are going up through the air."

"It is a sort of fancy touch!"

"Yes. Climb in."

McGuinness did so.

The manager departed.

To reappear in a minute with an armful of Roman candles.

"Be careful, though, of one thing," cautioned the manager.

"What?"

"How you shoot off the Roman candles."

"Why?"

"If you should put a ball from one of them through the balloon it would collapse, and you would be liable to have your neck broken by your return trip down here."

"Faix I will be very careful in that rayspect. I won't fire in the air at all!"

"No!"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I have a betther schayme."

"You have?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"I'll lay out the crowd."

The other shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't care a continental what you do as long as you don't bust the balloon."

"Are you all ready?" asked the manager.

"Yis."

The manager turned to the men at the windlass.

"Hey there!" he bawled.

"Aye, aye, sir!" they responded.

"Are you ready?"

"Aye—aye, sir."

"Then let her go slow."

"Aye—aye!"

The next minute the balloon soared up.

It was ballasted just enough to move easily, and McGuinness began to enjoy his aerial trip.

"This bates walking," he soliloquized, as he lit a Roman candle, and amongst the plaudits of the crowd, soared heavenward, letting off a couple of Roman candles.

The motion was delightful.

McGuinness enjoyed it.

"Shure," he soliloquized, "now that I am aware av the playsures av ballooning, I will buy two or three and kape them in sthock. The motion is soft and deightfully asiy."

Meanwhile Ruby Porker was nursing his wrath, for so vexed was he at what he called McGuinness' base ingratitude, that he entered the bar and took a drink.

He was not a drinking man, and the fumes of the drink—in fact, he took several—went to his head.

Alcohol had a very bad effect upon him.

It did not make him feel amiable and at peace with all the world.

Decidedly the reverse.

It made him vindictive.

A couple of potations convinced him that he had done wrong in not annihilating McGuinness on the spot.

"If I could find him now I would knife him to a certainty," he muttered.

A third drink farther increased his ire.

"If I could find the sawed-off gorilla now," he muttered, "I'd show him what it is to insult a Porker. Wonder where he is?"

Turning to the bar-keeper he inquired:

"Did you see anything of a little sawed-off Mick, the ruffian who made a fool of himself on the roller-skating horse?"

The bar-keeper nodded.

"Yep," he curtly responded.

"Where is he now?"

"He was in here a little while ago. Just before he went up the balloon."

"The balloon?"

"Yes."

"What balloon?"

"The one that gives free rides."

"He don't mean to leave the country, does he?"

"No. The balloon is a fake to a certain extent."

"How?"

"It's a sort of a dummy balloon. It is held safe from skipping by only being allowed to go so far."

"How's it worked?"

"Easy."

"Well, explain."

"It goes up on a rope which is wound around a windlass."

"A windlass?"

"Yes."

"What's that for?"

"Why, so it can't get loose, of course."

The drink-juggler's words put a scheme for revenge into Ruby Porker's head.

"Suppose," he said, renectively, "if any evil-disposed person should sever the rope, what would happen?"

The dispenser of beverages jerked his thumb toward the ceiling—

"Up in a balloon, boys, up in a balloon,
All amidst the little stars
That twinkle round the moon,"

he chirped.

"Then I am to infer that the severance of the rope would give the balloon its liberty."

"Cert."

A diabolical idea entered his head.

On a champagne basket he espied a hatchet. Just the thing for his purpose.

Already he perceived his revenge near at hand.

To brace himself up for the scheme which he had of squaring accounts he slyly made love to it.

When the knight of the bar had his back turned he, to use a very expressive term, swiped it.

He slipped it up the back of his coat.

"Revenge," he said, in a mutter, "is sweet. I will pay up that flannel-mouthed Mick, confound him."

To be sure of not failing in his resolution he done the worst thing he could to further inflame his animosity, he mixed his drinks.

Before he had taken whisky.

Looking at the various ornamental cards descriptive of beverages which were pasted on the wall he read one:

"Absinthe cocktail."

What an absinthe cocktail was he did not know. But he was just reckless enough to do anything.

He swallowed it.

The mixture of the two drinks was enough to make a man crazy enough to lock his grandmother in a smoke-house and set fire to it.

He left the bar-room and staggered out into the vacant lot.

He got there just in time.

The balloon was slowly arising.

He could see McGuinness shooting off his Roman candles.

He gritted his teeth.

He smiled.

Not an angel's smile.

Reversely, that of a Mephistopheles.

Sneaking forward he raised his hatchet.

It flashed in the calcium-lights.

It did not flash for long.

Chop!

Chop!

Chop!

The hatchet descended three times on the rope.

Although the hatchet was dull, being chiefly used to pry the lids from boxes, the arm that wielded it was temporarily steeled by revenge.

The trio of chops done the business.

His action was so quick and so unexpected that those about the windlass did not have time to grab him in time.

They stood as if in a daze.

And before they could recover their scattered wits the balloon was at liberty.

They only remained in a daze for a moment.

Then they grabbed him.

"What in thunder do you mean?" a dozen angry, terrified voices demanded.

He did not explain.

Dropping the hatchet, he also dropped himself.

Down on the ground.

The mixture of drinks had made a temporary maniac out of him.

His addled brain just retained memory enough to retain the barkeeper's carol.

He pointed idiotically to the fast-disappearing balloon.

He repeated part of it.

"Up in a balloon, whoop! up in a balloon,
'Roundsh-er little stars,
Twinkle 'round the moon."

Then the reaction came.

He dropped to the ground with a shriek like a maniac.

"Guesh I'm square

Grabbing one of his Roman candles, he also grabbed his hat and lit it inside of it.
The prayer must have done the business.
The match blazed up.
It was but the work of a second for him to light the Roman candle.
He was put in suspense once more.
The Roman candle only sizzled.
Would it go out?
Would it not?
Judge of his joy when he beheld it after awhile conclude to change its mind.
Bright sparks came flowing from its tube.
Fizz!
Fizz!
Fizz!
Bang!
A bright ball shot up.

"Grane is its hue—and I am saved!" he joyously exclaimed, at least as joyously as he could under the circumstances.

His aim was true.
The ball punctured the balloon.
It collapsed like some stricken monster.
Down, down, down it came.
Until he felt it safe for him to drop into them.
He selected a weeping willow as being the softest place to disembark.

With another prayer he hung himself into its branches.

His invocations had been heeded apparently.
For he managed, after breaking a couple of branches, to collar one.

There he hung suspended until more by sheer will than physical strength he managed to drag himself upon it.

His troubles, though, were not yet over.
A man came along with a gun.
He beheld McGuinness.
Startled at the unexpected sight he leveled the gun more out of surprise than maliciousness at McGuinness.
"Don't shoot!" wailed McGuinness. "Can't ye see I am thraveling for pleasure? I ain't a berrud or a baste."

PART XI.

THE man with the gun put it down at the sound of McGuinness' voice.

"Who're you?" he queried.

"Shure, I ain't quite shure av anything since I have started thraveling for pleasure."

"Traveling for pleasure," repeated the other, with a look of surprise.

"Yis."
"But how did you come into the tree?"
"I jumped from the balloon."
"What balloon?"
"The wan I kem in from Philadelphia."
"Say?" asked the bunter, "what is the reward?"
"Reward!" echoed McGuinness.

"Yea."
"What for?"
"Taking you back to the lunatic asylum from whence you come. Is there any reward out for you?"

"Not for me, but there maybe for the balloon. Ye will find it collapsed a little ways farther on. Use yez eyes."

The gunner did so.
"There is something that looks like a big rubber bag lying down in the ditch," he said.

"That's it."
"But it's collapsed."
"I know it."
"How did it occur?"

"It wur me own act. I shot a hole into it wid a Roman candle."

"So you had Roman candles in the balloon?" grinned the other.

"Yea."
The gunner leveled his weapon at the inhabitant of the tree.

"I'm sure you're off your nut now," he remarked, "get out of that tree or I'll shoot."

"But—"
"No buts. Sherry?"
"I'll—"

The gunner cocked his piece.

"Will you drop before I fill you up with bird-shot?" he fiercely said.

He spoke with so much determination manifest in his accents that McGuinness concluded that it would be the very best thing that he could do to obey.

So he scrambled down the side of the tree.
His captor cocked his weapon.

"Forward—march!" he ordered.
"Where to?" asked McGuinness.

"The nearest Justice of the Peace."

"What do I want with him?"

"You can't stuff any taffy like that down my throat."

Stir your stumps!"

"Which way?"
"Right ahead."

McGuinness plodded ahead.
Soon a road was reached.

"Turn to your right!" ordered his guardian.
The turn was made, and up the road McGuinness moved.

"For Heaven's sake," begged McGuinness, "can't ye kape me in thrall wid the butt-ind? Troth, the gun

may possess a hairy trigger and go off widout yez manin'g it."

"I'll tend to that," promised the other. "Stop at the first house you see on the right hand side of the road."

McGuinness was in agony as he tramped along.
Suppose the gun would go off, where would he be?

But he realized that there was no use of kicking.
Never was he so thankful as when he beheld a house.

He marched up the graveled path which led to it.
"Ring the bell," commanded his custodian.

McGuinness did.
He was bound to get square on something, so he gave the bell a jerk which created an unearthly clamor.

His summons was soon answered.
An irascible little man with a red head came to the door.

His face was almost as red as his head with passion.

"What in thunder do you mean by pulling the bell in that manner, you infernal scoundrel?" he hurled at McGuinness.

McGuinness was getting reckless.

"I wanted to be sure that yez would hear me," he explained.

The irascible little man simed again.

"Here," he said to McGuinness' guard, "who is this man?"

"He's a lunatic," came the prompt response.

"A lunatic! Um—er—I don't doubt it at all. He looks like a born maniac. What did he do?"

"Run away with a balloon."

"What?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where from?"

"Philadelphia."

"Ye are a loiar!" promptly disputed McGuinness, "the balloon ran away wid me!"

"That will do, sir!" thundered the dispenser of justice, "he looks mad enough to do anything. I believe he is crazy. Just march him inside."

Still under cover of the firearm, McGuinness was promenaded into a sort of temporary lock-up which was at the rear of the building.

It was a cheerful apartment—very.

That is for those who might like it.

It was simply a large room, devoid of any other furniture except gated bars, but a pair of old-fashioned English stocks, such as they use on the other side of the briny, and which was the pride of Justice Pepper's heart.

He had bought them cheap at an auction, and never failed to make the most of them by locking up anybody whom he supposed it would be safe to.

"He is crazy, that is certain," decided the magistrate.

"Now," he continued, to the gunner, "I must ask you to help me put him in it."

The gunner was perfectly willing.
Despite McGuinness' struggles he was incarcerated in the article of torture.

And a fine looking object he was when the deed was done.

"Now, my man," said Justice Pepper, in a milder tone of voice, "you might just as well tell us from what mad house you escaped."

"I tell ye, be Heavens," angrily cried McGuinness, "that I niver wur in a lunatic asylum in me life, that is not till I got here."

"We'll see about that," said the justice, as he left the room.

Poor McGuinness.
He presented a fine picture.

But he was not left alone in his misery.

It soon became noised around amongst the small boys that there was a lunatic in the stocks; a lunatic who being locked up could not hurt them.

This was nuts for the boys.
In they slid one at a time.

McGuinness appealed to them.

"Boys," said he, "have ya hearts?"

"Yah!" chorused the boys.

"I ain't what I seem to be."

"Yer crazy," declared one boy.

"Crazy!"

"Yea. Fellers, let's have some fun with him. I know where there is a whole lot of rotten eggs."

This speech was hailed with cheers.

A villainous idea is always sure to be caught on to.

McGuinness felt that he was in for it.

How he did pray that none of them would ever come back again.

This time his invocation did not work as well as it did in the balloon.

The boys arrived.

Armed with the hen-fruit of mature age and loathsome odor.

Then the carnival began.

The boys were skilled marksmen, and in a little while McGuinness was covered with the noxious contents of the eggs.

Then sort of afraid of the consequences of the trick they had played they stole away.

Meanwhile, McGuinness' family were, it is needless to say, almost worried to death about him.

But they did not worry long.

Byron Skitts telegraphed westward for traces of McGuinness.

One of the dispatches fell into the hands of the justice of the peace.

It read as follows:

"Look out for a wealthy gentleman, who, by accident, was carried away in a balloon. Liberal reward. Chief of police of Philadelphia. Name of party wanted—McGuinness."

The worthy ladler out of punishments read it.

It was his turn to pale.

Having very little money himself, he entertained a great worship for wealth.

His legs almost gave way under him.

His teeth chattered.

McGuinness had good grounds to proceed against him for malfeasance in office.

He realized, however, that it was better to take the bull by the horns.

So bracing himself up as well as he could, he entered into the presence of the captive.

But his mien was changed.

He was as mild as some drooping little lily.

He could not help starting, though, at the comical appearance of McGuinness.

McGuinness glared savagely at him.

"What do ye come here for now, ye flend?" he demanded, "to sind more young divils in to throw eggs at me?"

"Mr.—Mr. McGuinness," he faltered, "I have made a mistake."

"A mistake!" savagely said McGuinness, "it is more. It is an outrage."

"For which I will be only too glad to atone," assured the official, "by any means in my power."

McGuinness concluded to play possum.

He could get square afterward.

"Mistakes are liable to happen," he said, "only for pity's sake get me out of this internal machine."

The justice was only too ready.

He summoned help and the prisoner was free.

"Can I do anything else for you?" he interrogated, in honied accents.

"Yis."

"What?"

"Lind me a suit av clothes and a basin av wather."

That, too, the justice did.

Washed and dressed McGuinness felt better.

"Have you any money?" next queried the chameleon justice.

"Plinty."

"Then I suppose ye want to start back to Philadelphia at once."

"At wanst. What toime does the nixt thrain lave?"

"Don't mind the train. I will drive you to the city myself."

"Tanks!"

The Peppery one was as good as his word.

He hitched up, and before dark McGuinness was back in the Quaker City.

He proceeded at once to the hotel.

He found his family in their room in company with Mr. Skitts.

They were bewailing his fate, for he listened at the door a little while before he went in.

"Poor Mike," sobbed Mrs. McGuinness.

"I'm afraid he's a goner," remarked Dan.

"But, ma," said one of the twins, "we'll look real nice in black, and won't we be heiresses?"

That was the last straw which broke the camel's back.

He burst into the room like a little fury.

There was a general outcry of surprise at his appearance.

"Mike!" exclaimed Mrs. McGuinness, exhibiting strong symptoms of fainting.

"Pa!" cried the twins in concert.

"Yis, it is yez pa!" savagely announced McGuinness, "as ye will very well foind lather."

"What do you mean?" interrogated one of them.

"Ye will soon foind out, I said. I had enough av yez actions at the skating rink. To boarding-school ye go on the morrow."

They set up a wall.

But it had no effect.

The paternal heart was steeled against his dual offspring.

Mr. McGuinness protested at first, but McGuinness put his foot down.

When next the McGuinnesses resumed their traveling for pleasure (the twins were not along).

They were left, figuratively speaking, in the custody of a regular band of a school-mistress, who made their young life a regular martyrdom.

As for Dan, he was heartily pleased to see his father safe and sound.

"Hur

"And me moind is made up that henceforth the cars are good enough for me."

Mr. Skitts in duty bound applauded the resolution. Sure of his own position, he did not care a continental what became of the servants.

Very quickly did he "bounce the servants."

Of course they kicked.

But what could they do?

They had no written contracts, and Mr. Skitts only smiled as he watched them depart, their wages paid to date.

"Ahem!" he said, "I have an idea that I am in favor again. But I'll make him pay for it. McGuinness, look out for your money-bags."

Well, the programme was carried out.

The twins were put at a boarding school, the servants bounced, and Mr. Skitts felt that once more he reigned supreme.

"Well, you am bettah looking den youse fader. Ise'll gib youse credit fo' dat. What am I to do?"

Dan showed the porter the numbers which he had removed.

"Just you crawl in his berth and swear it belongs to you, that you are the help."

"But won't he get mad?"

"Who cares if he does. You play your part and here is a cigar for you, too."

A few more points did Dan give the porter, and then the plot was ripe.

McGuinness sat up quite late smoking after all the rest of his family had retired.

By and by he came into the sleeper.

He had beat a couple of commercial travelers playing euchre in the smoker, and he felt in a good humor.

in. Was de conductah perfectly sober at de time? Sometimes he drinks a little too much an' it goes right to his head. Berth numbah thirteen dey keep de coal an' de wood in, I tolle you."

That settled it.

McGuinness was furious.

"This is an outrage!" he cried, in a loud tone of voice.

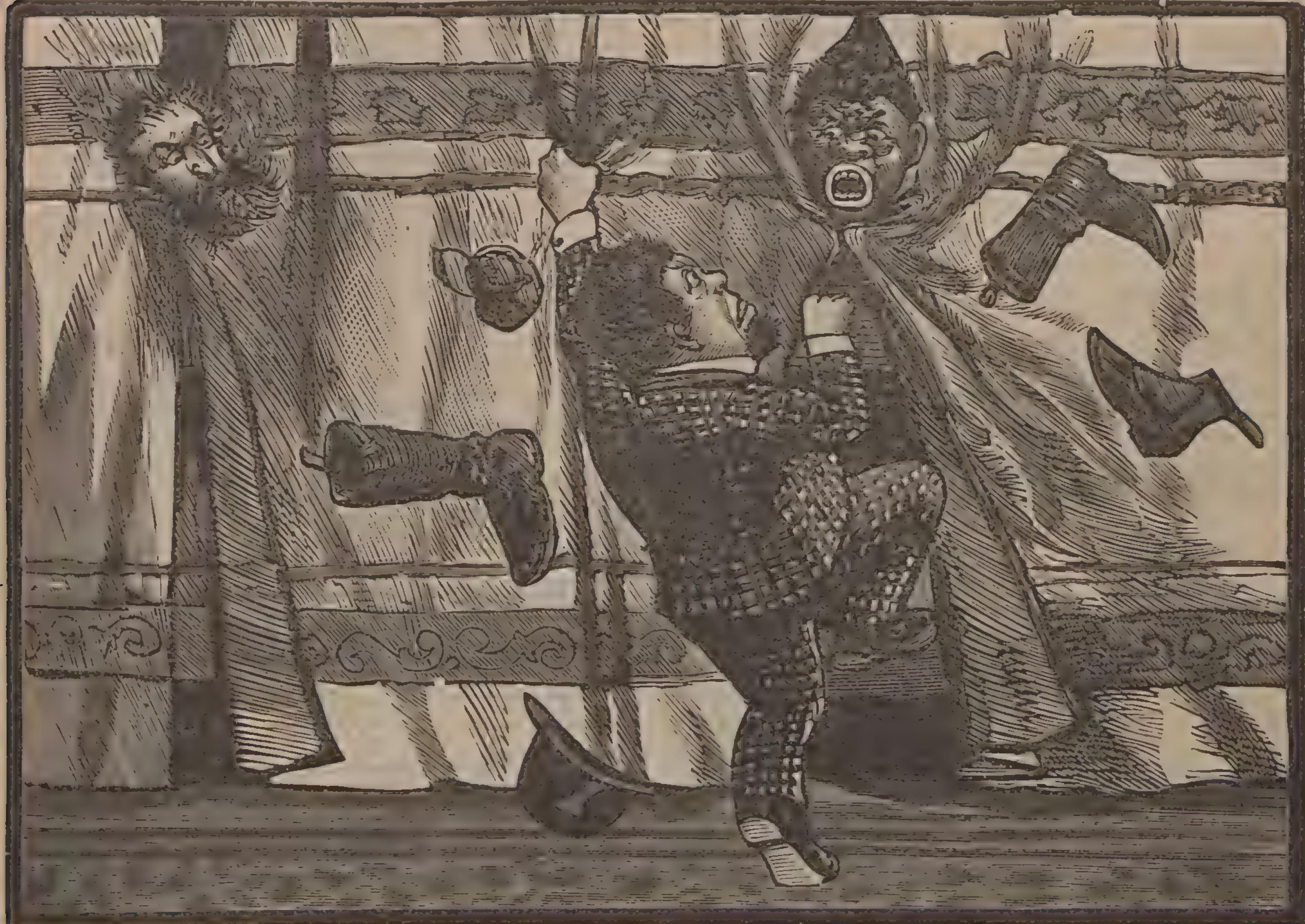
His speech woke up several of the passengers.

"What's the matter?" bawled somebody.

"A drunken conductor has given me the box that they kape the coal and wood in for me to slape in."

The other passengers did not care a continental. Most of them were dropping off to sleep, and they did not care if the conductor had deposited McGuinness on top of the stove for the night. They were angry at being disturbed.

"Oh, shut up!"



The curtains were thrust aside. A black face and a woolly head confronted him. "Wha' do youse mean, white man?" indignantly asked the porter. "Ain't this berth number thirteen?" asked McGuinness. "Deedy and it ain't." "Whose is it?" "Mine, ob course. I am de porter, and dis is my own berth!" he shouted.

A few days later they started for Omaha. McGuinness would not go anywhere nearer.

"New York and Philadelphia has been bad luck to me," he averred. "I'll take a long journey."

No event of particular importance occurred for the first day to McGuinness.

But when it came time to retire he got in hot water through his hopeful son.

That youth was a sly one.

He was not as stupid as he looked, and he never let a chance fly by to put up a joke on his sire.

The number of McGuinness' berth was thirteen, and Dan unperceived took the little brass figures off.

Then he rang in with the colored porter, whom he found whistling away at his work in his own little den at one end of the car.

"Say, charcoal!" greeted Dan, "want to make a stake?"

The coon grinned.

"Dat's me, young boss," he replied. "What am de nature ob de service to be performed?"

"Go to bed."

"Wha'?" gasped the colored gentleman, opening his eyes wide. "I done can't do it. I've got all my work fo' to do befo' mawning."

Dan held up a bill.

Money talks.

"Just you do as I say," he requested. "You've seen a little sawed-off gentleman floating around here?"

"Sort ob crazy like. Ain't you his son?"

"Tee."

He walked down the aisle of the sleeper looking a the numbers.

They were all right.

With one exception.

A most important one.

He could find no berth labeled thirteen.

Presently, though, he espied what appeared to be a vacant berth with no number at all on it.

"That's it!" he said. "The number has probably fallen off."

Acting on this supposition, he began to clamber into it.

He did not get far.

The curtains were thrust aside.

A black face and a woolly head confronted him.

"Wha' do youse mean, white man?" indignantly asked the porter, who was occupying it.

"Ain't this berth number thirteen?" asked McGuinness.

"Deedy and it ain't."

"Whose is it?"

"Mike, ob course. I am de porter, and dis is my own berth!" he shouted.

"But where is number thirteen?"

The porter looked serious.

"Who tolle youse to take berth thirteen?"

"The conductor, ob course."

"Snoah youse ain't dreaming?"

"Why?"

"Dar ain't any berth numbah thirteen."

"There ain't?"

"No."

"How's that?"

"It's just a dummy dat dey keep de coal an' wood

"Sleep on the floor!"

"Sit up all night!"

"Go out on the platform and cool off!"

"Take a drink of ice water!"

"Go soak your head!"

So they yelled.

But McGuinness wouldn't shut up.

"It's an outrage," he roared. "The conductor ought to be sent to State prison for obtaining me money under false pretenses."

His fellow travelers tried a new move to make him hold his tongue.

One man who was suffering from the neuralgia started it.

He leaned down and picked up one of his shoes.

"Will you dry up?" he asked.

"Indade, and I won't."

"Once!"

"I'll kick if I like."

"Twice!"

"Me tongue is me own."

"Three times you have had fair warning. Boys!"

"What?" chorused the others.

"Bombard him! Slug the gorilla!"

The mischievous idea was caught onto in a minute. Instantly the air was full of flying boots and shoes, for a bad example is very contagious.

Poor McGuinness danced up and down, vainly trying to dodge the missiles.

He had but little success.

Whack!

A boot hit him upon the thigh.

Thud!

A shoe took him in the stomach.

Bang!
A big boot of the cowhide style of architecture caught him just below the belt.
It doubled him up like a hinge.

"Ye cowards!" he yelled, as he recovered his wind a little, "ye are like wolves. Ye fought only in packa- Bedad, one at a time, I could lick the lot av ye."

This challenge only raised another hubbub.

The shower of missiles was redoubled.

McGuinness got it hotter than he did before until he was forced to shut up to save his life, for a boot whizzed dangerously past his head.

Then a sudden idea came to him.

He went back to the berth occupied by the porter.

"To save me life," he said, "I will make a bargain wid yez."

"What?" asked the porter.

"I'll pay ye fur your berth."

The porter saw a good chance for a strike.

He yawned.

"Boss," said he, "I see pow'ful sleepy. What am I wuth?"

"A dollar."

"Kain't do it. Five is de price."

"For Heaven's sake," came in chorus from the rest in the sleeper, "give him five and shut up or we will lay you out again."

McGuinness saw he was at the porter's mercy.

He produced the required amount and as the porter crawled out of the berth McGuinness crawled in.

"It seems, bedad, as if me enjoyment wud niver diminish," he groaned; "sometimes I wish I wur back on the rocks."

PART XII.

PRETTY soon the conductor came along, swinging his lantern.

He nudged McGuinness.

Flashing the lantern in his face, he demanded:

"Tickets."

McGuinness was ready for the fray.

"What do ye mane?" he asked, in accents not at all amicable.

The conductor punched the tickets.

"What do I mean about what?" he queried.

"Giving me a dummy berth."

"A dummy berth?"

"Yis."

"Seems to me it is my turn to ask you what you mean? What is the matter with this berth?"

"I had to purchase it."

"Doubtless you did. You bought it from me once. Who else sold it to you?"

"The naygur."

"You mean the porter?"

"Yis."

"He had no right to sell it."

"He hadn't?"

"No."

"But shure he said it was his, and that the berth you had given me were naught but a dummy that they kept the coal and wood in."

The ticket-puncher began to smell a mouse.

"I guess this is your berth fast enough," he said, "only somebody has been playing rats on you."

"They have?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Do you suppose they give a big black coon like him a berth? He ought to be thankful to sleep standing up. This is your berth."

"It is?"

"Yes."

"But there ain't any number on it."

"Good reason why."

"Why?"

"Somebody, to have some fun with you, has removed the numbers."

"They have?"

"Yea."

An ominous look came into McGuinness' eyes.

"I wud like to find out the wan who did it—but ye bet I have made up me mind to wan thing."

"What?"

"I'll kick the stummers out av that colored porter! Ye ought to loikewise."

"I had?"

"Decidedly. It is a soine reputathion he is giving ye."

"What did he say?"

"He towld me that ye wurdhrunk all av the toime, and did not know where you wur stowing away a man."

That touched the conductor on a tender spot.

Like most railroad men, he was an ardent temperance man.

"He said that, did he?" repeated the conductor.

"Yes, sir."

"That settles him. I'll break every bone in his black body. Just wait a minute."

The conductor left the car.

He invaded the den of the porter.

That coffee-colored gentleman was hard at work polishing up the boots and shoes for the morning and singing in a low tone of voice:

"Early in de mawning, at de break ob day,
Playing on a corn-cob bed,
Little piccanniny, bawn in ole Vabginnny,
Bress de day dat—"

He stopped right there.

The conductor grabbed him by the collar.

He gave him a couple of vigorous humps with his knee below his spinal column.

The porter was overwhelmed with surprise.

"G' way—g' way, dar! Luff me alone!" he yelled.

"Oh, yes, I will when I kick some of the lies out of you."

"Luff me alone. What did I lie 'bout?"

"You thought it was comical, didn't you?"
"Comical to do so' what?"
"Play tricks on that gentleman—you know which one—about the berth, and lie about me. I'm drunk, am I?"

The porter grinned.
He had made up his mind how to act.
"Stop dat humping, Mistah Jones," he said, "and I done tolle youse de whole truse. I was only having a little fun."

The conductor relaxed his grasp.
"Out with it!" he ordered.
"Dat boy am de debbel."

"What boy?"
"De ole man's son."

"What did he have to do about it?"

"He hired me so' to put up de job on ole McGuinness."

"He did?"
"Dead fac', sah."

"Confound him, I'll teach him to get folks into trouble!"

"Doan't, sah."
"Why not?"

"Youse nebber get any credit so' interferin' in familly quarrels. Sides, it wasn't quite square in me to squeal on de boy."

The conductor winked.

A wink of great penetration.

"You are a double-header," he said. "Now you will go and work the kid for not splitting on him."

"Such a thing am possible."

"Meanwhile, fork over."

"What?"

"The money you robbed McGuinness of."

"Money?"

"Yes."

"What money?"

"Come, don't play possum, I know all."

It wrenched the ebon schemer's heartstrings to make good.

He deemed it his best plan, though.

"Nebber mind," he soliloquized. "Isee'll get it back from de kid."

The conductor tucked away the boodle, which he gave to McGuinness later on.

And he also decided not to interfere any further. He would let the matter drop just where it was.

Only to one thing did he resolve.

Now that he was posted on Dan to look out for him. It was all in the family, anyway.

McGuinness being assured that the porter had been duly punished for his funny business, concluded that he would be magnanimous and forgive him, although he made sundry passes at that sable servitor, which caused the coon to flee for his life.

Next morning Dan was up and floating throughout the train after they had stopped at a station and had the usual "twenty minute's refreshments."

He drifted into the baggage car.

Seated in camp-chairs about a curious looking box of tin, which was half full of water, were a lot of commercial travelers.

Dan was curious, of course, to see what was on the box.

Not being of a bashful disposition, he did not hesitate to investigate.

The "drummers" winked as they beheld the youth.

"Bet he can't do it," said one gentleman in the jewelry line.

"Bet he can," replied the young man for a hardware firm.

"Say he can."

"Say he can't."

"For how much?"

"A fiver."

"Make it ten."

"Twenty, if you please."

A member of the group called Dan.

"Here, young 'un," said he, "come up here to the box."

Dan got closer than ever to the box.

"What for?" asked he.

"There's an eel in there. See?"

Sure enough, the boy beheld a curious sort of an eel swimming around lazily.

"Yes, sir," said Dan.

"Well, we've made a bet."

"A bet?"

"Yes, I bet that you can't lift that eel out of that box in three tries."

"Why not?"

"Eels are slippery customers," capped in one of the gang. "I've lost about half a week's sal and comish trying to pick it up. Your hands, though, look just rough enough to do it."

"You do do it," said Dan's backer, "and I'll make you a present."

There could be no harm in trying.

He pulled his sleeves up as far as possible. It looked easy to corral that eel in a corner of the box and yank him out.

The drummers were silent as he plunged his hand in the box to corral the eel.

They did not remain mute long.

Dan boldly touched the eel.

The next minute he staggered back.

He felt almost as if he had been struck by lightning.

He was thrilled in every pore.

"Water! water!" he gasped, "it is on fire!"

The drummers were a good-natured set, and one of them gave him something out of a black bottle which revived him.

"Here," said one of them, throwing him a dollar.

"We've had a dollar's worth of fun out of you."

"But what ails the eel?" Dan asked.

"My son," replied one of the jokers, gravely, "you are not versed in the wonders of nature. This is the

celebrated electric eel found in the waters of South America and other foreign countries. It is warranted to excite emotion in the most languid."

Dan was a thoroughbred. He wasn't the one to whimper. Especially as he had the dollar, and the shock was leaving his system.

"Say, gents," he said, forcing a smile, "I can enjoy a joke. I ain't no kicker."

This speech made him solid with the gang.

"Good boy."

"You're a trump."

"No cals in you."

"He's a regular little man."

"More than his dad, I bet."

The last speaker suddenly appeared to recognize Dan.

"Say, my son," asked he, "you own a dad?"

"Yes, sir."

"The Castilian, ain't it, who kicked up the muss in the sleeper last night?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are deeply attached to the author of your being, ain't you?"

"Course."

"You would heartily dislike to play a trick on him—say like this?"

Dan saw at once that they were chaffing him.

"Oh, come," he said, "what are you giving me? Do you want me to rope dad in on the eel racket? If so, say so. What's it worth to rope the old man in?"

do is to grasp them firmly. One stings and the other shocks."

"How by?"

"One with its stinger and the other by electricity."

"Electricity?"

"Yes, sir."

"Get out."

"The eel of which I speak is perfectly harmless if he's handled right. Just grab him firmly, and I'll tell you, if you whack up with me, how to work the racket and skin the drummers."

"Ye will?"

"Honest."

"Dan, ye are me own flesh and blood. How do I victimize the drummers?"

"First you put sand on your hand."

"Where will I get the sand? We are not at Coney Island."

"Oh, the rear brakeman always carries sand."

"What for?"

"He throws it upon the track under the cars to prevent slipping of the wheels; that is in rainy weather."

"Indade."

"Yes."

"Are ye in wid him?"

"Yes."

"And ye are certhain sand will not allow the eel to paralyze me?"

"Yes, dad."

"Then broibe the brakeman to let ye have some."

The rear brakeman and his sand was a little fiction on Dan's part, but he had noticed in a second-class car a stove which had what is vulgarly called a "spitbox" filled with sand.

He went to it and obtained a handful.

"Here, dad," he said, on his return to the old gentleman. "Now brace up; put the sand in your pocket, and we'll see if we can't catch the smarties."

"But how," inquired McGuinness, "will I get a chance to stick the rapparees? Maybe they won't ask me to be a sucker. But howd on, Dan."

"Yes, sir."

"How did ye come to know about the affiliation betwane sand and an electric eel?"

"Learn it at school."

"Good for ye, Dan. Schooling is a great thing, and I only regret now that I ever loaned ye out to kape watch over Mrs. Finnegan's geese on the rocks instead av making a scholar av ye and sinding ye to Yale. Yes, education is a great thing. By and by, if ye are a good lad, it is sind ye to Yale will i. I will bet that ye will graduate head av the foot-ball team."

"That's all right," assented Dan. "Now let's go and do 'em up."

McGuinness, like the famous Barkis, "was willin'."

He was bound to get square on somebody for the fun that somebody had had with him.

McGuinness and his hopeful scion went into the baggage car.

There were the drummers.

There was the tank.

Also the eel.

McGuinness sauntered in as if he and Dan were perfect strangers.

The drummers were making a circle around the tank, watching it with great apparent interest, said interest being doubled as they beheld the two McGuinnesses enter.

McGuinness knew one of them, having scraped his acquaintance on the train.

"Hello, sir!" he saluted.

"Hello yourself!" answered the one accosted.

"What are ye lukking at?"

"Electricity."

"Where?"

"In that eel."

"In that eel?"

"Yes."

"What av it?"

"A good deal of it."

"How?"

"Touch him and see."

"What will be do?"

"Paralyze you!"

McGuinness smiled.

Incredulously.

"That is nonsense," he announced.

A chorus of dissent arose.

"What are you giving me?"

"You're off your base."

"Nobody can pick up that eel."

"That is without being struck half-dead or almost wholly so for life."

McGuinness retained his serene smile.

Indeed, it grew more serene.

"Gentlemen," he remarked, "several years ago I wur in South Ameriky."

"Hear! hear!" yelled the gang.

"I raycognizo the eel."

"Hear! hear!"

"Many a time have I plucked them wid me ungloved fist from the Caribbean Ocean."

"Hear! hear!"

"There is only one way to pick them up."

"What's that?"

"Don't be afraid av them."

With that there was more jeering.

McGuinness' composure increased.

He relied on Dan's faith about the sand.

"The next time I try to pick one of the fiends up I will do it with an eel-spear," capped in one drummer. "I feel fit for the hospital."

"As for me," said a second commercial gentleman, "I am all broke up."

"All roight, gentlemen," McGuinness remarked,

"ye may think I can't pick up that eel."

That was just what the rascals wanted.

They fairly hugged themselves with joy as they beheld him drop into the trap so easy.

"You're giving us a fish story, or an eel story, rather."

"If you pick up the reptile you're a good one."

"You're sure of a date at any dime museum."

"I don't believe a word of it."

"Me neither."

"We've been there and ought to know."

"Impossible."

McGuinness considered he had them hooked.

"Ye may scoff at me if ye plaze," he said; "wind is cheap."

"And that is just about what your statement about picking up that eel amounts to—wind," observed a drummer.

McGuinness felt he had them now.

It was a regular challenge.

"Ye may doubt me if ye plaze," he remarked,

"but I have money to back me wurruds wid."

Oh, how the drummers snapped him up.

They all wanted to be in the swim.

"I'll take five dollars' worth of it that you can't pick up the eel," exclaimed one.

"Me too," said a second.

"And I," declared a third.

"Give me a slice of the bet," begged a fourth.

"I'm with you," promised a fifth.

"Count me," yearned a sixth.

McGuinness began to weaken a little.

The bets were coming in too numerous, and besides, what if Dan was only giving him a stiff?

"But no," he mentally said; "bad as he is, he wud never put up a job on me loike that. Shure it wud be unnatural for him to do so, more especially as I am giving him whack."

"Hould on!" he exclaimed. "I am not a mint. I'll take a couple av yez."

This was at last, after a good deal of mock squabbling, agreed upon.

Two drummers put up five dollars each in the hands of a third, and McGuinness covered the amount.

He meant to sequester that eel in fatigues uniform, so to speak.

So he removed his hat, coat and vest, and rolled up his right shirt sleeve.

He approached the tank.

The drummers grew facetious.

They chaffed him.

"Good-bye, old man."

"What sort of a coffin do you prefer?"

"Funeral public or private?"

"Will we omit flowers?"

"Can I look after the widow?"

"How many horses will you have to the hearse?"

"Will the dynamiters turn out?"

"That's all roight," smiled McGuinness, with an effort.

"They laugh the loudest who laugh the last."

McGuinness obtained his sand.

Bravely he went to the tank.

There was his funny opponent swimming around lazily, and looking perfectly harmless.

He made one clutch at the eel.

That little joker was there.

Every time.

Dull and inert, he just floated near the surface of the water.

But the dullness and inertness was all put on.

The eel was a sort of confidence fish, and was just waiting for his victim.

And when he felt McGuinness grab him he knew that some countryman had bit.

Instantly he set his electricity to work.

Poor McGuinness.

He got a good deal worse dose of these curious fishes electrical powers than Dan had received.

He was nearly knocked off of his pins.

"Help! help!" he panted. "I'm on fire. Put me out, somebody!"

His appeal suggested to a depraved commercial traveler to take him at his word.

Seizing the fire-extinguisher, which stood in one corner, he turned it on at poor McGuinness.

The stream of chemicals struck McGuinness plump on the face, knocking him from his feet.

Verily, he was traveling for pleasure with a vengeance.

PART XIII.

THE drummers, like all of their class, were a good-natured set of fellows.

They went in for fun, but not for malice.

Their bets with McGuinness were all blinds on their part.

They knew very well that the sawed-off little Irishman could no more pick up that eel than he could grow hair on his teeth.

They did not mean to take a penny of his money; they only wanted to have a little fun with him.

And they had it.

How they did guy him!

"You was in South America!"

"You know all about electric eels!"

"Thought he had got them down to a fine point!"

"Serves him right for prevaricating!"

"Always stick to the truth, old man!"

"You're too old to peddle fairy stories!"

"Ought to be thinking of something else at your time of life!"

"Pity you was not shocked to death!"

What could McGuinness do but grin and bear it?

And the drummer with the fire-extinguisher soon let up on him.

The result of the dousing was to take a good deal of the electric shock out of him.

Soon he was almost himself again.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I give in. The wealth is yez."

Then they gave him the laugh.

"Keep your money."

"Put it back."

"We ain't skins."

"No burro business about us."

Then they grinned more than ever.

McGuinness could not tumble to the situation.

He endeavored to seek an explanation.

But the drummers would not give Dan away.

So McGuinness was more perplexed than ever, although he did have a slight

"Bedad!" he vowed, "I'll make amends for me folly."

"How?" queried Mr. Skitts.

"I'll have all me thrunks put off at some way station and stored."

"Which would be a very sensible thing to do, and as grand as your inspirations are generally. You might just as well let them ride at your expense, for really I don't see what else you can do, except hold an auction."

Mr. McGuinness took the joke in earnest.

"Shure, I moight do it," he said; "wud ye have wan?"

Mr. Skitts laughed.

"Not now, anyhow," he answered. "We'll leave the trunk question till later, till I see if I can't think of some way of getting rid of them without loss."

McGuinness shook his head.

"Arrah, Danny, ye can't give me any taffy loike that," said he.

"You don't believe what I say?"

"No."

"All right; I only hope one thing."

"What's that?"

"They don't get hold of you."

"Never fear, bye, I guess I can take care of myself."

"All right; only hope you can."

With that the conversation closed.

Back went Dan to his friends, the drummers.

"Boys?" said he.

"Well?" said one of them.

"Want to come in for some more fun?"

"Who with?"

"His nibbs."

They entered into the scheme with enthusiasm. Another racket on McGuinness.

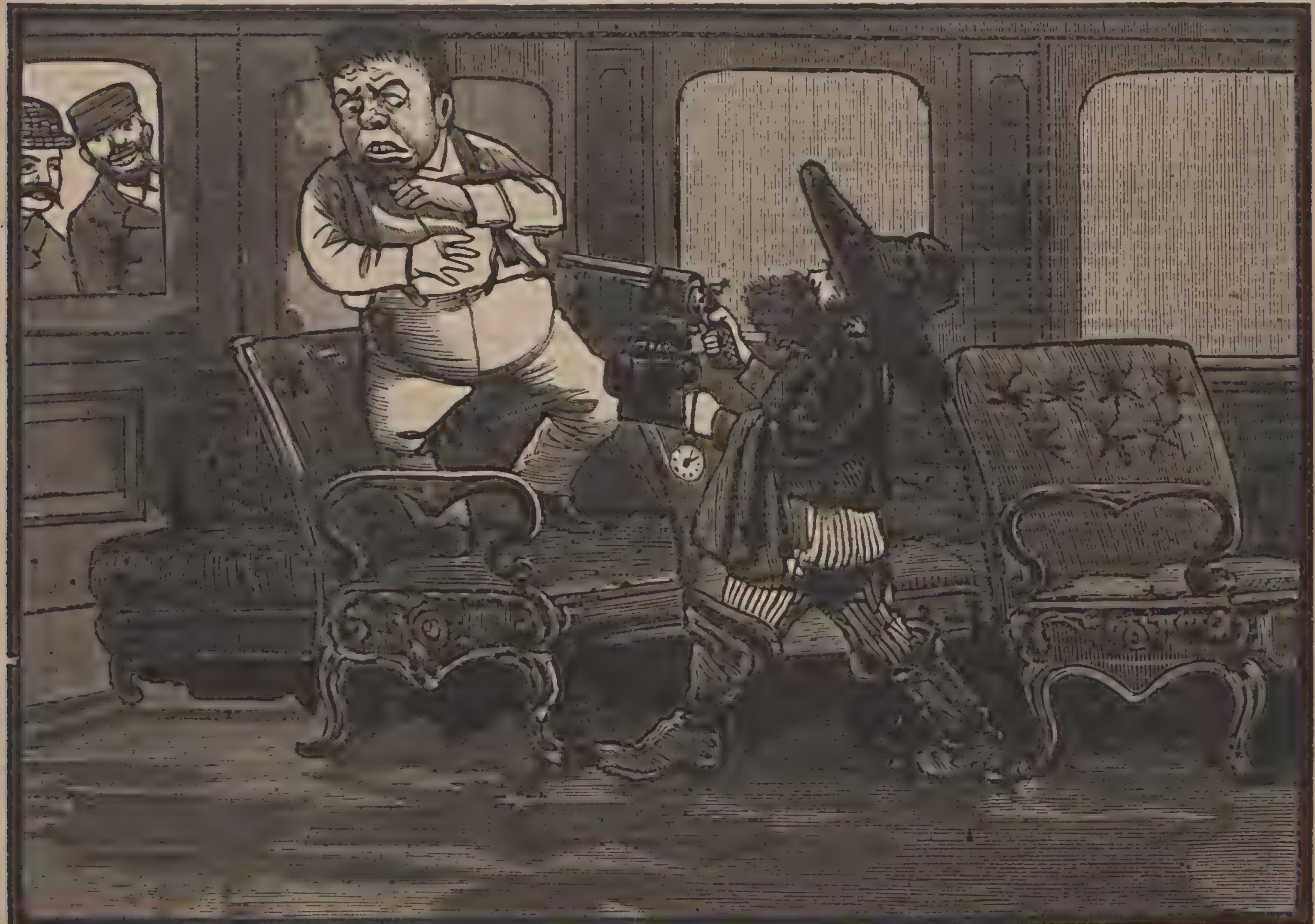
Fate in throwing him in their way had most assuredly served to while away the tedium of the trip, for most of them were going long distances.

The drummers consulted.

"I've got a domino which will hide your face," said Gus Herty, one of them.

"And I," volunteered a second, who traveled for a hardware firm, "will give you a small cannon and also a dark-lantern."

"Thanks, ever so much," said Dan. "Now you know it is the old man's custom, after he gorges himself at a meal, to come in the smoker and lay off while he puffs away at his cigar. Just you get me the traps when the time comes and I will show you



He presented such a comical sight when he got on the seat that Dan had hard work to keep from laughing. He did not, however, and ordered gruffly: "Let the concert proceed."

"Do so," begged McGuinness, "and it is me all who will always thank ye, and perhaps make ye some little souvenir av a present in what me daughter calls broken back, or something loike that. This stuff, ye know, that is dug out av buried cities which get buried in lava whin the volcanoes adjacent to them blow up."

"All right," said Mr. Skitts, trying hard to keep his countenance, "I'll be ever so much obliged."

Meanwhile, Dan was sore.

He considered that his father had not acted at all square to him in the eel episode.

"See if I don't get square on him," he muttered.

He was one of his word.

But he did not let his father know he had his back up.

He had resolved, with the assistance of his friends the drummers, to put up another little pleasant surprise on the author of his being.

Therefore he disassembled.

"Say, pop," he said, "there is one thing riding by rail that I don't cotton to."

"An' what may that be?" queried McGuinness.

"Train-robbers."

"Thrain-robbers! What do ye mane?"

"I was told that there was a regular sort of Jesse James gang working this railroad."

"Is that so?"

"Oh, it goes. I got it straight from one of the drummers."

McGuinness grew interested.

"How do they worruk?" he asked.

"Come right through the cars after having stopped the train, and go through every one."

"Rob them?"

"Yea."

"Your respected dad?"

"Yes."

"Would they?"

"Well, wouldn't they?"

Anything to relieve the tedium of the journey, for most of them were going a long distance.

"What is it?"

"Give it to us!"

"Don't keep us in suspenders!"

"Relieve our anx'ety!"

"Ejaculate it!"

Dan proceeded to do so.

"I have been giving dad another fiction."

"Good for you. What is it?"

"Train-robbers."

"Train-robbers?" queried the lively New York drummer, who was as full of mischief as an egg of meat, and whose name was Gus Herty.

"Yea."

"How do you mean to work it?"

"Easy enough. I'll do it."

"You?"

"Yea."

"How?"

"I'll be the robber, if you boys will only fake me up."

"Would they?"

"Wouldn't they."

In Dan's respected father they had desoried what in the vernacular of the road is called a "first-tripper."

"We're with you," came the response.

"Thanks," responded Dan, "but first I will have to be a borrower."

"What of?"

"An outfit suitable for a gay railway free-booter."

a circus. Only, of course, you fellows have got to skip out."

That they readily agreed to, and the train-hands were posted and requested not to interfere, which they did not. They liked a joke as good as the next one, although they might be the servitors of a grasping monopoly.

Therefore, it was much to McGuinness' surprise when he entered the smoking-car he found it vacant. He was its only occupant.

He wondered at it.

But not long.

"It is playing faro are they in the baggage-car," accounted he for their absence.

His cigar happened to be a good one, and that put him in a good humor—at least temporarily.

"They are all playing poker," he soliloquized, "and it is me ardent wish that every wan av them will have to borry money to do it wid, though not a cent wud wan get from me."

He sat there for quite a long while.

The drummers were helping Dan make up meanwhile.

"Me lad, after all, ain't such a bad wan," he soliloquized, "but he nades pruning down occasionally. A vacation thrip to a salt moine in Russia wud not hurt him."

The cigar, as we said before, was no ranker, and he gradually felt more at ease.

"Dan," he said, "ought to get six months for his taffy about thrain-robbers. If I find it out to be another eel fiction I'll skin him. They can't make me believe that there are thrain-robbers now."

So he sat and puffed away in contentment.

But not for long.

The jokers did not mean to leave him thus at peace with himself.

They had "faked" Dan up in grand style. When he entered the car he did it softly as possible. But not so softly but that his father beheld him at once.

Where was McGuinness' disbelief in train-robbers now?

Here was one.

Sure as Fate.

That is, if all the illusions surrounding a train-robber should go.

To carry out the joke the farther, they had provided him with a dark-lantern to enhance the spectacular effect, probably, though what good a dark-lantern was in daytime they did not pause to consider.

But it had its effect "allee samee."

"Hands up!" requested Dan, in as hoarse a voice as he could assume.

McGuinness felt a cold chill come over him.

Here was a veritable train-robber.

Pistol and even dark-lantern, McGuinness never stopping to consider the absurdity of a dark-lantern in daytime.

His hair stood on an end.

He wished that he was far away from where he was.

"H-hey!" he stammered, while he could feel the cold fear-drops make their appearance on his forehead.

He waved Dan off.

"Wh-wh-who you?" asked he.

Dan flourished the pistol.

"I am Captain Mud," he announced.

"Capthain Mud?" repeated McGuinness.

"Yes."

"Wh-what do ye do?"

"That you will find out very soon. I am a gentleman of the road."

"Thin why didn't ye stay there?"

"There is no use shouting for help, for the train is in the possession of my confederates. Give me your watch and chain!"

"I can't."

"Why not?"

"Ain't I got me hands in the air?"

"You can take one of them down."

That was true.

Seeing it was no use of subterfuging, he obeyed the mandate.

He put one hand down, and delivered the jewelry required.

"Now your boodle."

"I—I left it all in my berth."

The pistol was fairly shoved under McGuinness' nose this time.

McGuinness recolled.

"Luk out; it might go off," whined he.

"You're right, pard. That is what it will do if you don't mind me in everything."

Reluctantly McGuinness delivered what money he had in his clothes, which was not much, as Mrs. McGuinness was cashier of the family.

Dan frowned as he counted the amount.

He looked fiercer than ever.

"You are a nice pill," he thundered.

"Wh—why?" whispered McGuinness.

"You're worse than a confidence man."

"H—how?"

"Putting on such blasted lugs on nothin'. Take off your coat."

"Me coat?"

"Yes."

"Ye don't want that?"

"But I do."

Off came the coat.

"Put it on the floor."

The mandate was obeyed.

"Your vest?"

That also was deposited.

"Now," said Dan, "because yer have turned out such a skin, I mean to have some fun with you."

Fun!

At the sound of the word McGuinness could have killed the joker.

He was not a hog.

Surely he had had all the "fun" (?) he wanted. But he realized that he was at the bandit's mercy.

He had heard the words.

It was best for him to obey.

He tried to calm down a little.

"What is yez oidea av fun?" interrogated he.

"My father was a nigger-minstrel and my mother a song-and-dance lady."

"What do I care if yez ould man wur the wold man av Borneo—saix, I wish I wur in Borneo now—and yez ould woman a Circassian girl."

"That will do. All I want you to do is dance."

"Dance?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ssure, I ain't shook a hoof in years."

"The more reason you should now. Get up on the seat."

"The seat?"

"Didn't I say it?"

"What's the matter wid the flure?"

"No back talk. Do as I say. I love to see a good variety act, for you look as if you was just fitted by nature for a variety act."

"What do ye want me to do?"

"Dance, didn't I tell you before? And I also want you to sing."

"Sing?"

"Didn't I say it?"

"But it is out av the question."

"Why?"

"I can't."

"No taffy. Get upon that seat and let the festivities eventuate."

McGuinness was in a hole.

He was, or rather thought that he was, completely at the seeming villain's mercy.

He presented such a comical sight when he got on the seat that Dan had hard work to keep from laughing.

He did not, however, and ordered gruffly:

"Let the concert proceed."

McGuinness tried to gain time.

Surely the whole train could not be in the hands of he outlaws.

Help must come sooner or later.

He began parleying with Dan.

"What will I sing?" he queried.

"Anything."

"But I only know wan song."

"Sing that."

"But maybe ye have heard it?"

"I don't care if I have. Warble it."

"But it's a chestnut?"

"You'll be about as lively as a chestnut if you don't twitter soon. What is the song?"

"Tim Finnegan's Wake."

"Good! I ain't heard that for years. Let her go."

McGuinness mounted the seat.

"Begin!" mandated Dan.

McGuinness surmounted the seat.

"Now do your best, cully," adjured Dan.

McGuinness was a sweet singer.

Almost as fine a vocalist as a bull-frog.

He was, likewise, a hefty dancer.

But he was in for it.

If he had ever heard the old proverb to the effect that a bird who can sing, but won't sing, must be made to sing, he realized its truthfulness now.

Tim Finnegan's Wake is supposed to be a comic song.

McGuinness made it comic.

Very much so.

He sounded like some corpse temporarily galvanized into life.

"Tim Finnegan lived in Walker street,

An Irish jinileman, mighty odd;

He'd a beautiful brogue so rich and swate.

And to noise in the wurruld he carried a hod."

"Good," applauded Dan; "you'd make your fortune, cully, not on shape, but voice. Sing it faster."

"Ain't I singing it as fast as I can now?" growled McGuinness.

"What did I tell you? No chin-music except in the way of song."

McGuinness, perforce, had to continue his vocalization.

"Wan morning Tim felt rather full,

His head felt heavy, which made him shake.

He fell from a ladder and broke his skull,

And they carried him home his corpse to wake."

"Now," grinned Dan, "do the chorus. Do your best. Remember the chorus is the best part of it. There is where everybody joins in. And while you are singing the chorus you must dance, of course."

There was no use of McGuinness' acting ugly.

The bandit had the bulge on him.

So McGuinness sang the chorus:

"Whack, hurrah, hurrah for Finnegan,

Welt the flure yez thotters shake,

Isn't it the truth I'm given yez,

Lots av fun at Finnegans wake."

McGuinness felt that he had no alternative but to obey.

It is not at all pleasant to face the frowning muzzle of a revolver and realize that you are liable to furnish a job for an undertaker.

"Now dance," sternly said Dan.

Again McGuinness demurred.

"I have not shook a hoof for years," he pleaded.

Dan was adamant.

His father might just as well have pleaded to a rock.

"It will give you exercise," assured Dan—"dance."

McGuinness did, and if he was not a picture of misery while he was so doing there never was one.

"Elegant," praised Dan, "do it some more."

McGuinness was forced to repeat his Terpsichorean feats until his bones fairly ached.

"Let up on me," he begged, "for the sake av yez mother, though I doubt if ye have wan that wud care to own ye; let up."

PART XIV.

DAN kept his respected father at his variety performance until he got tired of doing the train-robber act.

Then he slowly retreated from the car, keeping the old man covered with the pistol.

"Don't move for five minutes," he ordered.

McGuinness did not.

All of his boasted courage had fled.

He kept as quiet as could be for fully five minutes.

More like ten.

Then he gave a vigorous yell.

Accidentally, (?) of course, all of the drummers came rushing in from the other car.

Their faces expressed amazement.

"What's the matter?"

"What's up?"

"What does this mean?"

McGuinness could but groan.

He felt sheepish, too, after his avowed disbelief in robbers.

"He sank back on the seat.

He closed his eyes.

He pretended to pant for breath.

"What's the matter?" asked the foremost.

"Water!" gasped McGuinness.

"Water?"

"Yis."

There seemed to be a scarcity of water, but there was notof black flasks.

Every drummer was provided with one.

McGuinness grabbed the first offered.

He was not bashful, and there was very little left in the flask when it was returned to its owner.

He heaved a sigh of relief.

"What?"
 "They won't believe that I got robbed."
 "Robbed?"
 "Yes."
 "Who said so?"
 "I do."
 "When?"
 "Just a little while ago."
 "Where?"
 "In the smoker."
 "Why, pop?"
 "Don't ye believe it?"
 "Believe it? No, actually I don't. Maybe you fell asleep and dreamt it."
 "Then where's my money?"
 "How do I know? I was in the smoker most of

McGuinness tried to smile, but the effort was a sickly one.
 "I have not the least thing the matther wid me as I know, only me son says so," declared he.
 The physician, whose name was Kurtz, took McGuinness' wrist in his hand.
 He felt it carefully.
 He shook his head.
 The shake was an ominous one.
 McGuinness got onto it, and of course it made him feel a good deal better.
 "Is there any truth in Dan's wurrnds," he interrogated, "that anything ails me moind?"
 The other hemmed.
 He spoke like one who hates to break bad tidings.
 "Vell, Misder McGuinness," he finally hesitated,

The drummer hired the whole section.
 If we have not money of our own it often gives us a secret satisfaction to get somebody to spending.
 "Now," he said, as he locked the door and pulled out a razor with which he had provided himself, "I vill to work."
 He did get to work with a vengeance.
 The razor flew fast and swiftly.
 Soon McGuinness' head was bereft, almost, of hair, as a billiard ball.
 "Now," said the pseudo doctor, "we must put ice, but no—der vos no ice convenient. I wash your head mit vader und put my skull-cap on you. Den I borrows an ostercoat?"
 "What for?"
 "So dat you won't catch cold."
 He was as good as his word.



He borrowed the skull-cap. McGuinness sported it. It fitted him well. His size was about nine, and the skull-cap was about a number seven. McGuinness looked sweet when he was all done up.

the time, and it was queer I heard nothing about it. Pop?"

"What?"

"You're all out of condition."

"Bedad, I wud loike to put some one else in the same fix."

"I'll give you a tip."

"What about?"

"Your health."

"What ails it?"

"It can't be right."

"Why not?"

"All these cranks you have like eels and robbers. See here?"

"Well?"

"I'll tell you what I will do."

"What?"

"Get a doctor to call on you and see just what is the matter."

"What doctor?"

"He's right on board. Shall I get him?"

Constant dripping wears away a stone.

"Go ahead," he commissioned Dan.

Dan went.

The doctor was a myth.

But a German drummer, who wore spectacles and traveled for a drug firm, readily consented to assume the role.

Dan returned with him.

"Pop," he said, "allow me to introduce you to Dr. Bolus."

The sham man of medicine bowed profoundly.

"Vat vos der madder, Misder McGuinness?" he asked, peering over a pair of spectacles, which he had hurriedly borrowed.

"Id vos the duty mit a doctor to dell der trath. Some doctors would lie und say dot you vos all righd."

"Ain't I?"

"No. You vos threatened mit brain fever."

That was a staggerer to McGuinness.

At first he tried to assume that the doctor (?) was joking.

"Ye don't mane it?" he smiled, in a sickly sort of way.

"I do."

"But what wur the cause?"

"Excitement, I guess."

"But what, if ye are in earnest, will I do to cure it, or rather avert it?"

"First, you vill has to get your head shaved."

"Shaved!"

"Yes."

"What for?"

"Too much pressure mit der hair warms the brain."

"Get out."

The impostor pretended to be offended.

"All right," he said, "suit yourself; I vill go away."

He made a move as if to leave.

McGuinness detained him.

"I wur only joking," he apologized. "I place me-silf in yez charge."

The joker consented to be mollified.

"We vill go in the drawing-room car," said he,

"und hire a secdion. There vill be no publicity aboud."

"Come along."

McGuinness obeyed.

He followed his conductor like a lamb to the slaughter.

He borrowed the skull-cap.

McGuinness sported it.

It fitted him well.

His size was about nine, and the skull-cap was about a number seven.

That was not the only "borrow" the mischief-maker made.

He went to one of the porters and borrowed a towel.

This he tied over McGuinness' head.

McGuinness looked sweet when he was all done up.

He was what the Scotch call a "bougie man" in appearance.

With his shaven head he presented a spectacle which was decidedly laughable—for an outsider.

Then the two returned to the family circle.

Needless to say that McGuinness was greeted with dismay.

"For pity's sake, Mike," exclaimed Mrs. McGuinness, "are ye crazy?"

"No," he answered; "I am warding av it off."

"Warding of what off, pa?" wailed Terese Evangeline.

"Brain fever."

"Brain fever?"

"Yea."

"What do you mean?"

"I am threatened wid brain fever, didn't I just tell ye?"

"Who said so?"

"The docther."

"What doctor?"

"A friend av Dan's. He said it wur my only hope to escape a serious illness. Wud ye have me go mad? However that moight place ye, it wud be an agreeable

trip for ye to come to the lunatic asylum, for ye are always fond av gadding around."

"But you look so awful!"

"What care I for looks as long as me rayson is preserved?"

"Well, you know best yourself, pa, but you look awful!"

Then McGuinness subsided for awhile.

It was not in his build, though, to keep quiet long.

He started to roam through the car, and his comical appearance evoked much comment.

All of the passengers knew him, and they made all sorts of game of him.

"What is it?"

"Where did it come from?"

"Who opened the cage and let it out?"

"What's a prize for a beauty show?"

"You take the medal for comeliness!"

Almost instantly the conductor came rushing into the car.

"Who pulled that rope?" he excitedly demanded.

"I did," she gasped.

"What for?"

She pointed to McGuinness.

"He's mad," she said.

The conductor glared at McGuinness.

"Look here," he said, "I've got a good mind to put you off."

McGuinness weakened.

He began to wish he had not been so funny.

"I just did it in fun," he pleaded.

Now, the conductor was something of a joker, too.

He thought he would have some fun while fun was passing around.

He knew he could depend on Dan.

He called to him:

"Dan?"

"Oh, not much," replied the conductor, "only he's gone mad."

"Mad?" cried one nervous old gentleman.

"Yes, sir."

Everybody looked pityingly at the lunatic (?), although they took good care to shrink back in their seats while he passed them.

Then they broke out afresh:

"Poor fellow!"

"I always knew he was not right!"

"Think of the feelings of his family!"

"His poor wife!"

"And his daughter!"

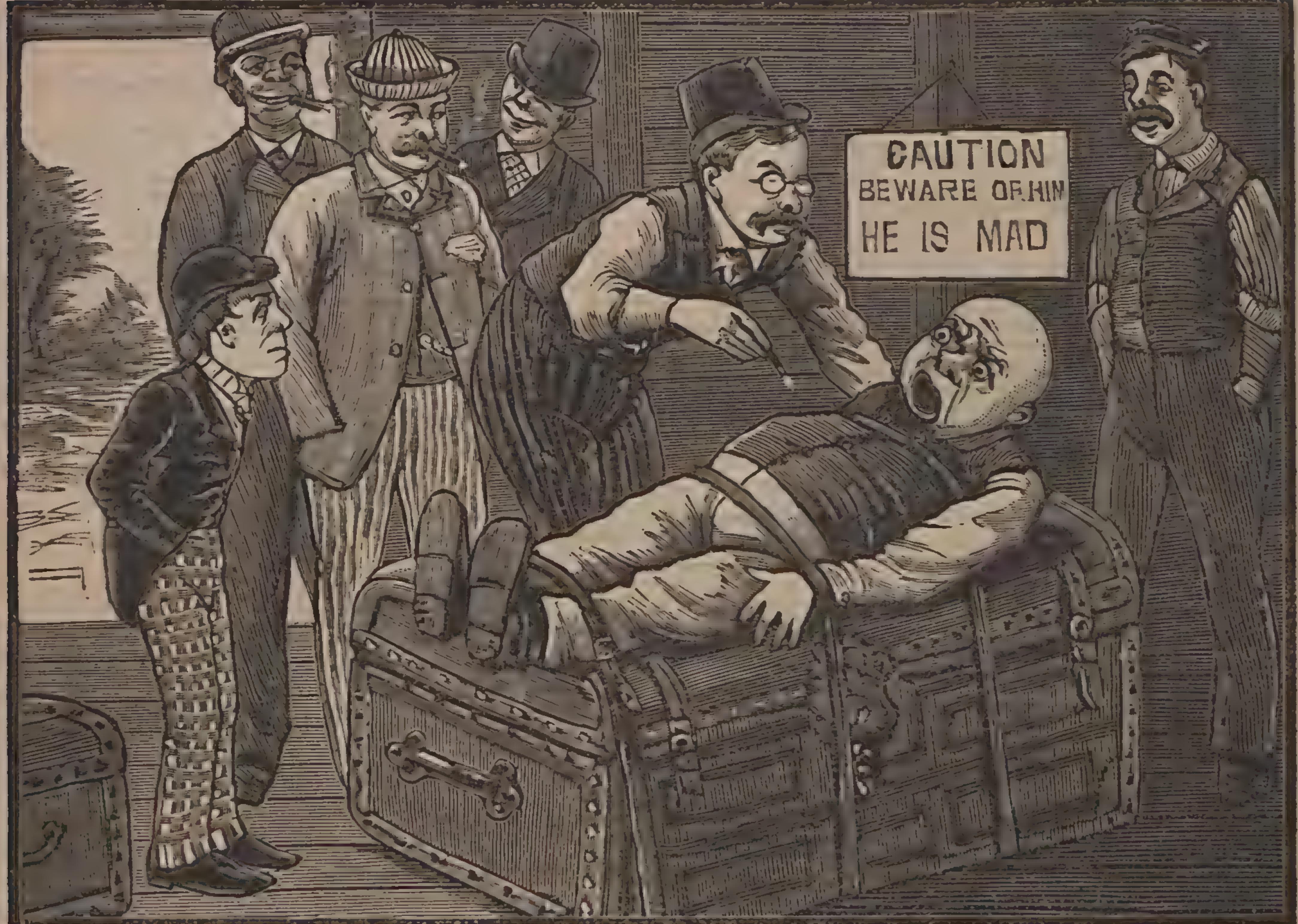
"Such a nice girl!"

"And his son!"

"Such a nice quiet boy as he is!"

The conductor promenaded McGuinness into the baggage-car.

He gave the wink to his subordinates.



With the assistance of several willing jokers, McGuinness was strapped to a big trunk, and a fine picture of misery he was.

So they sang out; but McGuinness paid no attention to them.

During the trip he had scraped the acquaintance of a venerable maiden lady, who he flattered himself he had got quite a smash on.

"Good gracious, Mr. McGuinness!" she ejaculated, "what on earth ails you?"

"It is bad luck I am," he confided. "I am liable to go mad!"

She looked aghast.

"Mad?" she repeated.

"Yes."

"When?"

"Any minute."

"You don't mean it?"

"But I do."

She looked so astonished that McGuinness resolved to get square a little for the course of sprouts that he had been put through, and he selected her as his victim.

Suddenly he rolled his eyes horribly.

He pretended to shake all over.

He made his teeth chatter like castanets.

"I—I think I am going mad now," he avowed.

The spinster was deceived.

One could not blame her, for McGuinness was a spectacle calculated to appall any one.

She gave one yell.

She leaped on the seat where she was sitting. She grabbed her umbrella and waved him off, and at the same time she gave the bell-rope a pull.

A sharp whistle, the sound of brakes being put on in a hurry, and the train came to a full stop.

Dan came over right away.

"What is it, sir?" he asked.

"Your father says he's mad."

"I'm sure I don't know if he is yet, but I know one thing."

"What?"

"The doctor said he was liable to go mad at any minute."

"He did?"

"Yes, sir."

"Begorra, Dan McGuinness, I'll get aven wid ye," he promised.

Dan didn't care.

"I only told the truth," he meekly said.

The conductor motioned to McGuinness to get up.

"You come with me," he ordered.

"Where to?"

"The baggage-car."

"What for?"

"Madmen are not to be depended upon. Come along."

McGuinness could but comply, and the conductor marched him into the baggage-car.

Of course his progress through the train excited comment.

"What's the matter?"

"What ails him?"

"What has he been doing?"

"Biest if it ain't McGuinness again!"

"Seems to me he's always in hot water. What has he been doing now?"

Thus the passengers interrogated.

They took it, of course.

"Hello! what's up?" asked the baggage-master, who, as usual, was the conductor's right bower.

"Madman," laconically answered the conductor.

"What are you going to do with him?"

"Chain him up."

When McGuinness heard this he kicked worse than ever.

"I won't be chained up!" he protested.

The conductor looked ugly.

"It is little that anybody cares about you," he said.

"Come along and be chained. If you won't submit peaceably, I will have to use force."

The conductor appeared very determined.

McGuinness thought it would be best not to make any resistance.

That is physically.

But he did it with his mouth.

"I'll have ye broke," he assured.

The conductor was stolid.

"Go ahead," he said.

Amongst the old traps in the car he had a chain used to secure dogs up with.

There was a padlock went with it, and in a few minutes McGuinness was secured to a staple in the side of the car.

He was a fine-looking sight.

"Better sit down and take it easy," advised his tormentor.

McGuinness saw there was no use of resisting.

In a rage he flung himself down upon the floor of the car.

The conductor looked pleasanter.

"That's right," he said. "Maybe you will come around. To tell the truth, I hope you will." Next the conductor brought in a cup of water. Also a loaf of bread.

"What are they for, ye fiend?" bawled McGuinness.

"For you," grinned the conductor.

"For me?"

"Yes, sir."

"What do I want av bread and wather?"

"That's the diet."

"What for?"

"Lunatics are always fed on bread and water. It's the proper diet."

McGuinness felt this was too much.

In a rage he kicked over the cup of water, and flung the loaf of bread to the furthest end of the car.

The conductor did not seem to care.

He grunted some more.

"All right," he remarked, "suit yourself. You'll be wanting it before long."

McGuinness' answer was a fresh volley of abuse.

The conductor paid no attention to it.

He addressed the baggage-master as he left the car.

"Jim," said he, "if he grows violent get the water-boy to pour a little water on his head. It will cool him off."

McGuinness shook his fist at the water-boy.

He knew that personage was a veritable little imp, and would be only too glad to follow out the orders given him literally.

"If ye do," he threatened, "I'll make yez mother an orphan."

The water-boy did not seem alarmed.

"Sorry, boss," he said, "but I've got to obey orders or else I'll get sacked. Now, if I was you I'd just lie down and take a snooze."

PART XV.

McGUINNESS was in a truly nice plight.

There he was at the mercy of a little villain, who would not scruple to have any amount of fun with him, now that he was chained up, and could not get at the carrier of the water-pail.

His tormentor added to his happiness by advising him to "brace up and keep a stiff upper lip."

One would have thought that Dan would have been content with the plight into which he had placed his father.

But Dan, as we said before, was as full of mischief as an egg of meat, and besides, he had it in for his father. He had not forgotten his sire's perfidy, as he considered it, in the eel affair.

His busy brain thought up fresh misery for the source of his existence.

He concluded that brain-fever was hardly strong enough for a scare, and resolved to make it tougher.

Presently he came sauntering into the car.

"How do you feel, dad?" he queried.

"None the better for seeing ye, ye omadhoun?" savagely rejoined McGuinness.

Dan shrugged his shoulders.

He looked concerned.

"See here, pop," he said, "I do not believe you have brain fever at all."

"Nayther I have, as well ye know. Get them to untie me."

"Not for worlds."

"Why not?"

"I said you did not have the brain fever, didn't I?"

"Yea."

"But you've got worse."

"Worse?"

"I said it."

"What do ye mane?"

"It just serves you right, too."

"How?"

"Trying to go back on me."

"Bedad it wur her that has wint back on me. How did I go back on the ould lady?"

"Trying to mash that old crow in the third car. She's got a poliparrot."

"Yea, confound the bairn!"

"Why?"

"I thried to stroke his plumage, and what do ye suppose he did?"

"What?"

"Bit me."

Dan's face assumed a most agonized expression.

"Oh, pa," he said, almost tearfully.

"What?"

"Worse and worse."

"What is?"

"What you just told me."

"Why?"

"The parrot was mad at the time he bit you?"

"I suppose so."

"Fluttered his wings?"

"He did."

"Struck at you viciously with its beak?"

"Yea."

"Made a wound?"

"That he did."

"I tremble for you, pa."

"Why?"

"Do you really know what alls you?"

"Nothing."

"Would that I could hope so."

Dan spoke so solemnly that once more was McGuinness on a mental rack.

"Speak up, bye!" he ordered, sharply.

"Try to bear it, will you?"

"What?"

"What I am about to tell you."

"Tell it. Don't kape me in suspense."

"You have got," said Dan, speaking with the utmost of impressiveness, "the hydrophobia."

The idea seemed so absurd that McGuinness puffed.

"Get out!" he shouted.

Dan would not.

"You've heard of Pasteur?" he queried.

"Yes, I knew him."

"When was you to France?"

"No—in New York."

"Ah, nonsense! You are thinking of Tony."

"It might be. But continue."

Dan did.

Most impressively.

"He says," he fictioned, "that the bite of any animal while in a rage can produce hydrophobia. He says it is all nonsense that dogs are the only ones that are liable to it. Any animal can own it."

McGuinness weakened.

"Dan," he said, "ye ain't fooling me?"

"I only wish I was."

"Thin, Dan."

"Well?"

"Will ye do me a favor?"

"Certainly, pop. The more so as I am so worried about you. Think of what a horrible death it is."

"Is it?"

"One of the worst any one could suffer."

"How does it wurruk?"

"The first sign is a chill."

"Shure, I have wan now."

"The next restlessness."

"Restless! Dan, ye are growing sarcastic. I ain't restless. Oh, no, not at all. I'm so at harlmonny wile meself, that I could balance a match on the ind av me nose. Dan!"

"Yea, pop."

"Go for the docthrur."

Dan did not need to be bidden twice.

He went.

Into the presence of his pal, the German drummer, Gus Herty.

That joker greeted him with a smile.

"How's the duke?" he inquired.

Dan winked.

"Great!" he answered. "Say?"

"Let her go!"

"I'm going to have some more fun with dad." The drummer was in for the fun (?) right away.

"Tell me the scheme?" he invited.

"Brain fever is too weak?"

"Yes."

"I've changed it."

"You have?"

"Yea."

"To what?"

"Guess."

"Ah, don't procrastinate."

"Well, then, I have persuaded him that he has got the hydrophobia."

"Good Lord! What a nerve!"

"Serves him right. He thinks he's a regular dude and a gold-medal masher, and he was trying to win the affections of an old maid, who is so homely that I believe if she would look in a pan of milk it would turn sour right away. He got fooling with her parrot."

"Has she one?"

"Yes, and it's a corker! He annoyed it, and by and by got bit."

"Yea."

"I've scared him nearly to death telling him he is liable to catch the hydrophobia."

"From a parrot's pite?"

"Yea."

Mr. Herty burst out laughing.

"You vos dake the rag off mit the push," he complimented. "Vot bart do I blay?"

"Doctor, of course."

"Und my pizness?"

"To cauterize his wound."

"Me gauterize a vound?"

"Yea."

"But vat mit?"

"Caustic."

"Dot vos nonsense."

"Why?"

"I ain't got no gausdic."

"Don't I know that?"

"Den why sheak aboud id?"

"Say, Gus?"

"Say avay."

"Your head must be wooden."

"Vby?"

"Because you can't tumble sometimes if a house would fall on you. Listen."

"I vos all ears."

"Like, beg pardon, a donkey. All of the caustic I want will be served by a railroad spike."

"You means id aboud de gausdic being a guy?"

"Oh, shut up, or I won't tell you how we'll make it agreeable for dad."

"Oxblain."

"With pleasure. A railroad spike will do."

"Vot?"

"Yes, it's so."

"But dere vos no gausdic in a railroad spike!"

"Any fool knows that, but you can play it on pop. He'd never tumble if you used a crowbar."

The spike was soon procured by Mr. Herty.

"Then they went to McGuinness, who was as nervous as could be by this time.

Yet he tried to smile.

Blood will tell.

"Hello, Dan," he said, "back already?"

"Yea, daul."

"Got the doctor?"

"Yea."

The doctor advanced.

He looked as grave as a gravestone.

"How you vos, Misader McGuinness?" queried ha.

McGuinness glared at him.

"No betther at all for yez treatment. I ain't a fool. I know what I have got."

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"I won't believe it!"
 "You just ought to go in and see them."
 "Why?"
 "They are having a picnic."
 "In what rayspect?"
 "He's buying her papers and bananas, and telling her how good she will look in black."
 "He is?"
 "Honest fun."
 "Wait till I get a hould av him!" he panted. "I'll stop the racket."
 "Well, pop, there is only one way to do."
 "What's that?"
 "Keep calm."
 "Ain't I?"
 "You don't look like it."
 "But I am."
 "Nobody would ever suspect it."

"For Heaven's sake, but it is Mike!" she ejaculated. McGuinness glared at the pair.
 "Yis, it is I!" he exclaimed, in a tragical voice.
 "Skitts!"
 "Wh-what, Mac?" queried the lawyer.
 "Come out here!"
 "Out where?"
 "In the aisle."
 "What for?"
 "Ye don't know?"
 "No."
 "Ye thought me wife wur as good as a widow, an' ye are doing yez best to mash her."
 "What nonsense."
 "Nonsense ye may call it. Come out in the aisle, I tell ye!"
 As McGuinness spoke he grabbed Mr. Skitts by the collar and hauled him out into the aisle.

Peace being restored once more, McGuinness cooled off a little.
 When the train-boy came along he opened his heart and bought oranges for the group.
 Anybody would have thought that he would have remained quiet for a little, considering his experiences.
 But no.
 He must go roaming through the cars.
 He reached the smoking-car.
 The drummers, of course, were all glad to see him, especially Gus Herty.
 Gus Herty, as usual, was up to mischief.
 He had borrowed the old physician's electric battery, and was kindly dealing out shocks to victims.
 "Here, McGuinness," he invited, "come have a try."
 "Try at what?" asked McGuinness.



"Arrah! ould woman," he said, with a smile, "won't it break the hearts of the twins when I sind for them to their boarding-school and put them over the tub? It is proud I am av Theresa Evangeline; she left off her frills and took in plain sewing, which greatly pleases me."

"Still I am."
 "Pop?"
 "Well?"
 "Just try to go to sleep."
 That made McGuinness wilder than ever.
 "Slape?" he repeated. "How can I slape? It is in a foine condithion am I for slape. What wid the hydrophobia and the conduct av yez mother, no wonder I believe I will go mad in reality. Plaze, Dan," he begged, "unstrap me, so that I can get square wid that villain av a Skitts. I will wring his neck, I promise ye I will."

His words put a new scheme of mischief in Dan's head.

Why would it not be a brilliant idea to release his father and set him on Mr. Skitts?

So he pretended to agree with his father about the coquetry of his mother.

"See here, dad," he asked, "if I do let you loose you will promise me one thing?"

"What?"

"Not to bother Skittsy?"

McGuinness was willing to promise anything to get free.

"I will threat him wid icy disdain!" he declared.

"All right," and Dan soon had his sire freed.

Back through the cars they went, much to the surprise of the passengers.

But seeing Dan with him, they concluded that it must be all correct.

Needless to say that Mrs. McGuinness and Mr. Skitts were asounded at the arrival of McGuinness.

Mrs. McGuinness gave a yell.

Mr. Skitts started.

Of course this was as good as a circus to the other passengers.

They egged McGuinness on.

"Give it to him!"

"Break him in two!"

"Stop his mashing!"

"Put a head on him!"

"Wipe up the car with him!"

So they urged, and McGuinness might have followed their advice if it had not been for the opportune arrival of the conductor.

"Is it you again in trouble?" he asked; "how did you get loose?"

"None av yez business."

"Well, I'll make it my business. Come along back and get chained up."

McGuinness subsided at this.

He tried cajolery.

"Arrah, conductur dear," he pleaded, "I'm all right—let me alone where I am."

The conductor thought that after all McGuinness had been punished enough.

He relented.

"See here," he asked, "if I leave you here will you behave?"

McGuinness promised.

Anything not to get chained up again.

"Then beg Mr. Skitts' pardon."

This was tough.

But the conductor insisted.

With a very bad grace, McGuinness mumbled out an apology which Mr. Skitts airily accepted.

"All right, old man," he said, "but don't let it happen again."

"This battery."

"What kind av a battherry is it?"

"Electric."

"No, thanks."

"Why not?"

"I have quit on electricity since I met wid the eel."

"But it will do you good."

"How?"

"It will make a new man of you by bracing up your nervous system."

The others added their entreaties to Mr. Herty.

"Go ahead!"

"We've all tried it!"

"It feels delightful!"

"Rejuvenates you completely, as it were!"

Thus they yarne.

McGuinness, like the overgrown calf he really was, allowed himself to be cajoled.

He took hold of the handles of the battery.

The drummer toyed with McGuinness at first.

He only turned it on gently at first.

The sensation was pleasant.

McGuinness was agreeably disappointed.

He nodded his head in approval.

"Ain't it nice?" asked Mr. Herty.

"Yis."

"Refreshes you?"

"Yis."

"Puts the blood in circulation?"

"I'll own it!"

"Takes your head off?"

"It does relave the ache."

"Oh, it is great! I knew you would be tickled with it. Ain't you?"

"Yea."

Hardly had McGuinness made the confession, when Mr. Herty turned the battery on at full force.

McGuinness thought his last day had made its advent.

"Begorra!" shrieked he, as he writhed in torture, "let up on me!"

"Certainly," grinned the gentleman addressed, "after I wake you up a little."

PART XVI.

The amiable Mr. Augustus Herty finally took pity on his victim.

He shut down the battery, and McGuinness was free from the electric current.

What made it more pleasant for McGuinness was the jeers of the other drummers.

They chaffed him:

"Ain't it nice?"

"Delicious!"

"Cools one off so!"

"Removes nervousness!"

"Takes off a head!"

"Exhilarates the system!"

"Purifies the blood!"

"Oh, you'll be a new man in a minute!"

So they chirped, but their chirpings, of course, only served to get McGuinness wilder.

Flesh and blood cannot stand all manner of insults, and Mr. Herty's last funny business was the last straw that broke the camel's back.

"Mister Herty," he said, or rather howled, "do ye know what ye are?"

"Yea," calmly answered the gentleman spoken to. "I have the reputation of being considered one of the finest of gentlemen, and considered a scholar."

"Ye are not."

At this emphatic declaration Mr. Herty changed his mien.

"Look here, McGuinness," he said, as he corrugated his brows, "can't you take a joke? But I demand satisfaction."

"Satisfaction," echoed McGuinness.

"Yea, sir."

"Av what kind?"

"The code of honor declares that we must fight a duel."

"A duel?"

"Yea, sir."

"Man, ye are crazy."

"You won't be crazy when the duel terminates. Not much. You'll be dead—dead as a mackerel."

McGuinness, though, was game.

He did not take water.

"There is not a spasm av cowardly blood in me veins," he said, "and if it is murdher, I am in fur it. Where will we duel?"

"There is an empty freight car which has just been taken on at the last station."

"Yea."

"Well, we will go in there. You being the challenged party have the choice of weapons. What death-dealing article do you prefer?"

"Pistols."

This brave reply rather staggered Mr. Herty for a minute, but he soon recovered.

His active brain, fertile in all sorts of deviltry had conjured up a new racket.

Excusing himself for a minute he sought Dan.

"Say, Dan," he said, when he found him, "I want your assistance."

Dan was agreeable.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Can't you guess?"

"Dad?"

"Yes."

"Well, tell me what I am to do."

"Help me."

"How?"

"Your father and I are about to fight a duel."

This statement seemed so fabulous that Dan was staggered.

"Ain't you giving me taffy?" he said.

"No. It is all another joke. I'll get the pistols now. Come along and see the fun."

Dan, needless to say, willingly went.

They found the baggage-car deserted.

"How can I help you?" queried Dan.

"I'll get the guns."

"Yea."

"Load them myself."

"What with?"

"Guns."

"Powder and ball?"

"Nonsense! Did not I tell you that it was all a joke? There will be nothing but a cap and a little powder in my pistol. What I want you to do is to get a sponge."

"That I can do."

"A little red paint."

"I'll borrow it from the fireman. He is a regular dandy, and I guess he uses it to carmine up his cheeks, and he'll lend me a sponge, too."

"Now," went on the drummer, "when we meet and are I want you to hurl the sponge at your father, and be sure to hit him."

The programme was faithfully carried out.

McGuinness was on deck.

So was Augustus Herty.

Both parties, of course, had seconds, and in order to scare McGuinness more, the German physician appeared with a lot of surgical instruments.

"Umph," said he, "I hope you yos got a goot nerve. Mr. McGuinness?"

"Why?"

"You might be slain."

"What av it?"

"But your family?"

"They care so much about me. Whin I am dead they will celebrate the event wid a lawn party and a display of Japanese open-air fireworks."

The men were planted at a distance of some paces apart.

Then one of the seconds inquired:

"Are you ready, gentlemen?"

"Yea," replied McGuinness.

"Yes," said Mr. Herty, with a deadly glint in his eye.

"One!" counted one of the seconds.

"Two."

"Three."

"Fire!"

McGuinness shut his eyes although he claimed to be a man of audacity, and pulled the trigger of his pop. It exploded with a loud report.

At the same time Dan threw the sponge.

Dan's aim was true.

The faked up sponge clefth his father between the eyes.

The blood, for so McGuinness took it to be, trickled down his brow.

McGuinness concluded he was killed.

He fell to the floor, taking good care, though, not to hurt himself so doing.

Gus Herty dropped his weapon.

"Gentlemen," he uttered, "you can all see that I done it in self-defense."

The seconds nodded.

"True," said one, "he would have killed you if you had not slain him."

"Pick me up," requested McGuinness, "and carry me home to me wife."

This piteous appeal only set the whole mob of jokers at him worse than ever.

"You ought to be carried home to your wife."

"She will be pleased to see you."

"And she will marry Skittsy before you are cold in your grave."

"I don't even think she will take the trouble to put on black for you."

"Certainly not."

"She will have you buried by the county in the Potter's Field."

"I'll bet that she goes to a matinee the same day."

"And won't Skittsy have a picnic?"

But McGuinness was too scared to heed their jeers and scoffs.

"Byea," said he, "will ye do a dying man a favor? As I begged ye before, carry me home to me wife."

They were only too willing to do so.

So they formed a mock funeral procession, first having borrowed a blanket from one of the sleeping-cars and carried him in it.

And as they marched they sang:

"Connie Mavonreen, why did you die—"

"Why, why, why did you die?"

It was lots of fun for McGuinness' persecutors as they carried him along.

They managed to bang him up against the sides of the car at every step.

By the time they had gotten him into the presence of his wife he was as sore as a boil.

She gave a gasp of dismay.

"For Heaven's sake, Mike!" she asked, "what ails ye?"

"Luk," he pitiously appealed, "for the last time."

"Why?" she answered, not seeming very much worried, for by this time he had made himself the laughing stock of the whole train and she was completely disgusted with him.

"What ails ye now?" she asked, as he sank into the seat beside her.

"Ye."

"How?"

"Indirectly I have been killed in a duel on your account."

Mrs. McGuinness did not appear to take much stock in this declaration.

"Arrah," said she, "what are ye giving me; it is locked up in a lunatic asylum should ye be, and if ye kape on wid yez crazy capers I'll put yez there."

"Which ye would be only too glad to do," said McGuinness. "Do ye know what I have done?"

"What?"

"Fought a duel."

"Ye?"

"Yea."

"Get out, ye haven't the pluck."

"But I did."

"What war the massacre about?"

"Ye."

"What have I done?"

"Mrs. McGuinness, ye have driven me too far. Ye think ye are as fascinating as a June rose, but ye are not. Ye have an idea that every man is mashed on ye, whereas they are only making fun of ye. It is a soine masher ye are, wid yez false teeth in a glass every noight, an' no hair to yez head at all."

"What do ye mane?" asked Mrs. McGuinness, in surprise.

"Luk at me."

"Ye are enough to make anybody lok at ye," answered Mrs. McGuinness.

But McGuinness was good and mad.

His back was up.

"It is all your fault, woman!" he said.

"My fault?" echoed Mrs. McGuinness.

"Yea."

"How?"

"I have found out your perfidy. Ye mane to have

me kilt off somehow or another, and then marry Skittsy."

As McGuinness spoke, he caught hold of the almost paralyzed Mr. Skittsy, who, of course, was taken by surprise, being in total ignorance of the job which had been put up on him. McGuinness served him as a bulldog would a rat.

He grabbed him by the coat collar and gave him a couple of vigorous kicks. Then, out of breath, he flung him upon the floor.

"If I were not averse to taking human life it is dance a clog dance on ye that I wud."

Mrs. McGuinness had heard the words and witnessed her husband's actions.

She concluded that it was time for her to interfere.

She came to him.

She grabbed him by what little hair he had.

"What do ye mane?" growled McGuinness.

"I'll show ye," she said.

"Show me?"

"Yea."

"What have I done?"

"What ain't ye done? Iver since ye have been on the train, ye have been making a howly show out av yeysil and everybody else."

Mrs. McGuinness carried out her threat.

She did go for her unfortunate husband.

With a woman's favorite weapons.

That is to say, finger-nails.

She done good work

So he subsided, and went back to his wife and Mr. Skitts.

That gentleman was nursing his wrath.

"I'll fix him for what he did to me!" he said. "Anyhow, I am tired and sick of him. Little he knows the secret which I have locked up in my breast. Wait till I spring it on him and see how he will crawl."

The more he thought about what he considered McGuinness' base conduct—for really he had grown to look on himself in the light somehow or another as a benefactor—the more he concluded that it was a duty that he owed to society in general and himself in particular to reveal a long-kept secret, for he imagined that he had squeezed all that he could out of McGuinness.

And well he knew it.

his circumstances, but after a couple of days he got used to it, and to tell the truth he was probably a good deal happier when at work at his wash-tub up to his elbow in soap suds.

Mrs. McGuinness proved herself a true wife.

She took charge of the ironing department, and Dan too helped drum up custom.

At the end of the week McGuinness found that he was getting along very nicely, because everybody took a liking to him.

"Arrah! ould woman," he said, with a smile. "won't it break the hearts of the twins when I send for them to their boarding-school and put them over the tub? It is proud I am av Theresa Evangeline; she left off her frills and took in plain sewing, which greatly pleases me."

"Shure, Sis," he said, "I thought ye wur a regular dudeen, but I am pleased to see that ye are not."

Omaha. You supply a long-felt want. The Chinese must go, and it seems as if till yer hung out yer shingle, they had a gut on the laundry business. Perhaps yer are not aware of who I am?"

McGuinness timidly owned that he was not.

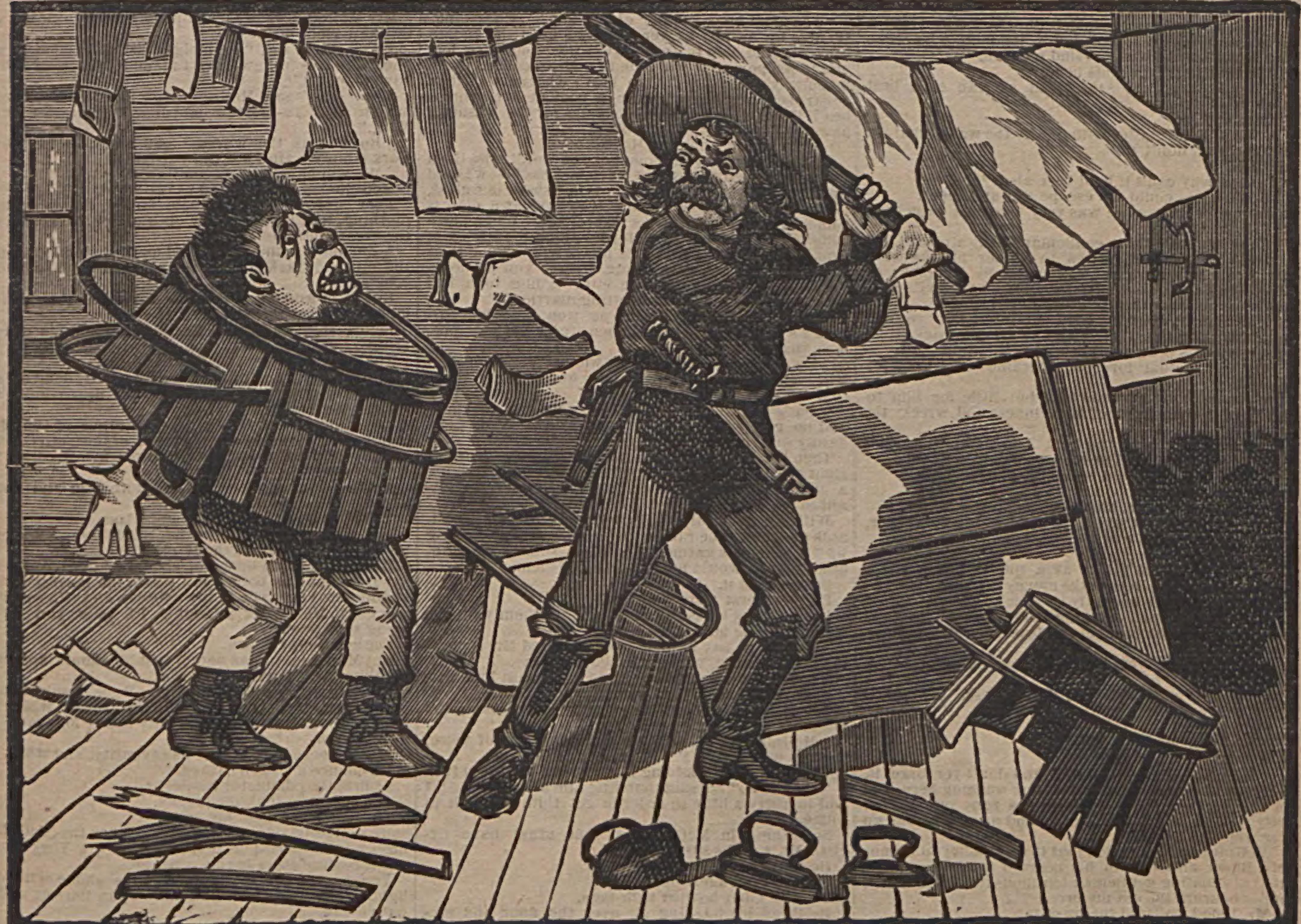
"Well, that is excusable on your part."

His caller struck an attitude.

"My name," he said, "is Blood. Blood with a big B, and everybody in Omaha kin tell yer my pedigree. Who whipped four Indians single-handed and left them for dead? I: was me."

McGuinness tried to be suitably impressed at this startling bit of news.

"Also," continued Mr. Blood, "can I down a grizzly bear in a rough-and-tumble wrestling-match! Everybody knows Blood, and ten to one, when you get my custom, your fortune is made, because they



He grabbed a washboard and began making a vigorous attack on the fixtures in the place. He worked with a will. In a few moments the laundry looked as if it had been visited by a hurricane.

Mr. Skitts had been playing our hero false all the way through.

He had spent McGuinness' money foolishly, and gambled it away.

Now McGuinness was literally without a penny.

"Look here, McGuinness," said he. "Let me reveal a secret."

"What is it?" asked McGuinness.

"You ain't worth a cent."

"What?"

"I said it."

"What do ye mane?"

"Just what I told you. You ain't worth a cent. I lied to you about the money that I said your uncle left you. It was only a few thousand dollars, and not, as you supposed, about half a million. He laughs loudest who laughs the last. You are as poor as a church mouse."

It was a terrible fall for McGuinness' air-castle.

Instead of traveling soon, would they all have to be working for a living.

Which was true.

For, on searching his pockets, McGuinness found out that all he possessed was about seventy-five dollars.

But his fare, together with that of his family, was paid to Omaha.

And upon reaching there, together with his wife, he started, after a little while, a laundry.

He entered into negotiations with a moon-eyed Chinese, and soon the laundry was his, he paying so much down, and the obliging Mongolian taking a mortgage on the wash-tubs and other fixtures of the little place.

It was tough on McGuinness at first, this change in

"It is a foine spectacle the twins will make, wan at aach ind of the basket."

PART XVII.

McGUINNESS felt himself happy the first day that he took charge of the laundry.

He had something to occupy his mind, and besides, he figured that there was no reason why he should not make money at the business, for he resolved to adopt a low scale of prices.

"The Chinayse may think that they have a monopoly av the washee-washee business, but I will show them that chape as their pricess are I can discount them. I can afford to lose money for a little while, so as to saycure custom, an' wanst I saycure a man's thrade he will niver lave me."

While he was thus soliloquizing a big, brawny six-footer entered.

Evidently he was a native of Omaha, an untrammelled child of the far West.

He was about six foot in height.

He had a black eye.

One arm was carelessly done up in a sling.

He wore a high hat of the vintage of 1845, a red shirt, and around his wa'st he wore a belt, in which was stuck three or four pistols and a bowie knife, about two feet in the blade.

He approached McGuinness, who was seated upon a soap-box, and inquired in hoarse accents:

"Are yer McGuinness wot keeps the laundry?"

McGuinness owned that he was that individual.

The stranger extended a hand which looked like a ham, so huge and red was it.

"McGuinness," said he, impressively, "welcome to

are all a-scared of me when I shake my hair, which I wear long, and they flee."

Thus speaking, Mr. Blood produced from a coat-tail pocket a handkerchief.

He unwrapped it.

He displayed its contents on the little counter.

Truth to tell, the contents of the handkerchief were not much.

They consisted of one shirt.

One pair of cuffs, very much soiled.

One collar.

And also a garment, which probably was Mr. Blood's night-shirt, although it had more of the appearance of a feed-bag than anything else.

"Wot's to-day?" he asked.

"Tuesday," answered McGuinness.

"When can you have them done?"

"By Saturday night."

"Not before?"

"Well, rarely, I don't see how I can. But seeing ye mane to give me a helping hand, I will thry to help ye."

Mr. Blood expressed his delight at this sentiment.

"Thanks," he said. "I'm like mud—I sticks to dem dat sticks to me. By the way, McGuinness?"

"Well?"

"Got a smoke?"

"No."

"The price of one?"

"Yis."

"Den why don't yer do the grand? Send down to the saloon on the corner and get a couple of smokes. Ask the barkeeper to give you Mr. Blood's own brand, two for half a dollar, and dirt cheap at that. And say, McGuinness?"

"Well!" groaned McGuinness.

"Got a milk-can?"

"What in the warruld wud I made av a milk-can? I have wash-tubs in which to wash me clothes."

"Dat's all right," assured the sociable Mr. Blood, as he touched his throat to indicate that he was almost consumed with thirst. "Yer hev been out in der air, ain't yer?"

"Yis," replied McGuinness.

"Didn't yer notice how dusty it is to-day? Why, the wind blows the dust right down yer throat until it feels like a red-hot oven. Yer like beer, don't yer?"

"Yis," confessed McGuinness.

"Den do der grand."

"How?"

"Send out for a milk-can full of the frothy. If you and your family don't feel able to hold it all, why I'll let them drink light and carry home wot's left of the beer in the milk-can."

"But where," queried McGuinness, "will I get a milk-can? Share, I don't know the man who milks the cows, and he wud not lind me wan."

Mr. Blood scratched his head.

"That's true," he said; "but we can even beat that."

"How?"

"What is the matter with one uv the wash-tubs?—it holds water, don't it?"

"Yis."

"Then why can't it hold beer also?"

McGuinness could not escape this argument.

More especially as he was very desirous of getting rid of Mr. Blood.

He saw that that gentleman had already had enough beer, and he desired to humor him, because Mr. Blood's appearance was decidedly ferocious, he looking as if he would like to pick a fight with anybody or anything that he could lick.

"All right," woefully said McGuinness, "ye can take the wash-tub. But moind ye bring it back."

Mr. Blood's brows corrugated.

His intellectual forehead became one knot of scowls.

He looked as if it would take but little for him to make a corpse out of McGuinness and wreck the laundry.

"Uv course," said the bold, bad man. "I don't take in washing and I never take a bath."

McGuinness hastened to mollify his guest.

"Say?" he said.

"Wot?" asked Mr. Blood.

"I don't believe that any of us cares much for beer, but I tell ye what I will do."

"Wot?"

"I'll give ye the proice av a quart av beer and a cigar loikewise. Here is the money for them."

Mr. Blood's face instantly became all smiles.

He insisted upon shaking hands again, doing it with a vim which brought the tears to McGuinness' eyes.

"McGuinness, yer bloody old mick, you are a thoronghbred!"

"Thanks," acknowledged McGuinness.

"Yer are true blue!"

"I hope so."

"And remember one thing."

"What?"

"Me brick, I'm your friend, and don't yer forget it. I'll have the whole town tring dere washing here, and when der supply of dirty clothes runs out in der city, I'll go out in der country and drum custom up for you with a gun."

McGuinness concluded that it was policy to humor Mr. Blood, although in his heart of hearts he wished that fascinating gentleman ten thousand miles away, miles beneath the sea preferred.

Mr. Blood collared the wash-tub.

"Ta, ta, yer ould gorilla," chirped he. "I'll send this here vessel back chuck full wid beer, and yer kin bet dat it will be chuck full to der top and fairly a slopping over. All blood and no milk is my motto when I go in to do der grand. Understand, I'm an old inhabitant, and I have my reputation for etiquette at stake. Why, if I didn't make myself free with you der boys wud think that you wur too high-toned for dem, and dey wouldn't give yer no washing to torture. Because they are all gentlemen's sons; most uv dem come from Boston, where I heard tell a man puts on at least one shirt a week, and some of dem have fancy night-shirts hid away in dere trunks, but which they haven't dared show yet."

"Why?"

"Because Omaha ain't no place for a tenderfoot."

Before he has been here two or three months he will find himself going home feet first."

"What do ye mane by that?"

"Because the boys don't like any French toilets. Dere was a poor devil uv a Frenchman who came around here with nuthin' but a full-dress suit and opera hat. Well, when der boys got true wid him he looked as if he had been blown up in a powder mine and afterwards rubbed down. Yes, sir, it don't do to work any polish off on the gang, because most of them were born in some Foundling Asylum and they hev a natural aversion to any one who they think are trying to pass for a double eagle in gold, when really it is nothing but a snide trade dollar plastered over with yellow paper. Now remember, Mr. McGuinness, I have shot off my mouth, and if you would take my advice and do as I say you will own the old diggings in regards to the washing line in a little while."

"I'll give yer a tip."

"Please do. What is it?"

"Yez must be particular about the boys' washing. Do dem up as fine as yer kin, and even the Indian braves would clip in and make a pool and draw lots just to see how they will look in a clean collar. And, by de way, I pity the Indian brave who gets a clean collar, because they will form a pool at five cents a head, throw dice for the whole gang for the washing, and it will end up the same old way."

"What's that?" queried McGuinness.

"Five or six dead Indians; but you won't miss them much. Now go ahead and have my clothes washed up in the latest Paris fashion. Don't spare der gloss, because I like a glossy collar. It shows dat a man is somebody, and makes folks respect yer. Wid a clean collar and a high hat he can pass along the streets of Omaha and half the people he meets will take off their hats and say: 'Good-morning, Judge; you are looking fine to-day—you must be either going to a ball this evening or else intend getting married.'"

McGuinness promised that he would do his customer's vast array of soiled linen up in the best possible shape.

"I will put a polish on ivery wan av yez cuffs that will enable ye, if necessity requires it av 1him, to use them as a looking-glass."

"Dat's just wot I want. You fix me up all right, and the gold will flow in yer pockets so fast yer can't hardly find time to count it."

Then Mr. Blood cocked his hat fiercely over his right eye and swaggered out into the street, looking a veritable tough, as doubtless considered himself to be.

With a heavy heart did McGuinness and his assistants undertake the rather obnoxious task of "doing up" Mr. Blood's garments. He felt somehow or another that he would make a botch of them.

But he tried it.

But his worst fears were realized.

He managed to scorch every one of them with the iron, which he heated too hot.

Needless to say he nervously awaited Mr. Blood's next appearance, which was the next day.

Mr. Blood did not look at all in a pleasant humor.

Neither was he.

The night before he had sat up playing poker, and got most successfully left.

"McGuinness," said he, in a hoarse tone of voice, "is my wash ready?"

With fear and trembling McGuinness produced it.

"Here it is," he said, handing him a package. "I had to hurry a little in order to get them through in toime."

Something in McGuinness' tone must have excited Mr. Blood's suspicions.

He took the bundle.

He tore it savagely open.

Then he fairly howled with rage.

He threw his washing all over the floor, and proceeded to jump on it.

Then he grabbed a washboard and began making a vigorous attack on the fixtures in the place.

He worked with a will.

In a few moments the laundry looked as if it had been visited by a hurricane.

Tables and tables were kicked apart, and McGuinness himself flung into a corner with a vehemence that nearly broke every bone in his body.

"I'll teach yer!" roared Mr. Blood, "ter try any tricks on me. Now, git!"

"Where?" asked poor McGuinness, thoroughly scared.

"Out of Omaha."

"But how can I?"

"Why not?"

"I ain't got any money to pay me car fare to New York, to where I mane to go if ever I get a chance."

"I don't care how you get to New York," savagely intoned Mr. Blood. "For two cents I'll put a knife in yer heart and send yer dere in an ice-box, but yer have got ter walk and that settles it."

McGuinness was at the other's mercy, as Mr. Blood produced a big revolver, which he flourished around in a reckless style.

So he went in a little back room and told his family what had occurred.

"Mrs. McGuinness," he said, "pack up."

"What for?" she asked, in surprise.

"The laundry is a shipwreck."

"A shipwreck?"

"Yis."

"How's that?"

"That assassin av a Blood has found fault about his washing and given me twenty-four hours to lave town."

Mrs McGuinness was completely broken down at this new piece of luck (?)

"Well," said she, "we moight jist as well start at once, and it is to New York I mane to go, even if we have to foot it."

"And that," said McGuinness, "is jist what we will have to do. To-morrow morning we lave for New York."

"But how in the warrnid can we lave for New York whin we ain't got our car-fare?"

"We will have to walk, that's all."

McGuinness was as good as his word.

They started off, the whole family, the following morning, trusting somehow or another to arrive at the great metropolis.

A fine picture they presented as they plodded along the railroad track laden with some little household effects.

But it is said that there is a special Providence which watches over the Irish.

Before they had gone far they came to a drawbridge.

The draw was open.

And a long train of freight-cars were delayed on one side of it until they could get an opportunity to get through the draw.

Naturally, the woe-begone appearance of the McGuinnesses attracted the attention of the train hands.

The conductor, a fat, good-natured fellow called to McGuinness:

"What's the matter, partner, with you and your gang? You seem all broke up?"

McGuinness fairly broke down at last.

The kind way in which the words were spoken touched him and he actually cried.

He made a clean breast of just how affairs were.

"Don't let that bother you," said the good-natured conductor; "just pile in my caboose and I'll see that you get to New York all right. I'll pass you right along somehow."

The conductor did so.

But McGuinness was bound that he should not lose anything by his generous action.

He handed to the conductor three bank books containing small sums of ten dollars apiece which he had deposited in a New York city bank for each of his children.

"Take these," he said, "as sayurity, and whin ye get a chance get them cashed."

At first the conductor refused.

But at last he took the money.

The conductor kept his promise.

By some sort of railroad free-masonry the McGuinnesses were carried clear through to New York without costing them hardly a penny.

You can bet that McGuinness' eyes shone with delight as he put his foot once more upon the soil of his native city.

"Niver agin will I go thraveling for pleasure. After this I intind to stick to me regular business and carry the hod."

So he did.

If McGuinness could not do anything else well, he could carry a hod to perfection, and he soon found employment enough at his old trade which enabled him to support himself and family, whom he soon managed to bring together again.

He does not live as high-toned now as he did before, but he is a good deal happier.

"Shure," he exclaimed the other night, as he sat in the bosom of his family, "I am a good deal happier now thin whin I thought I wur a regular gould bug."

[THE END.]

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